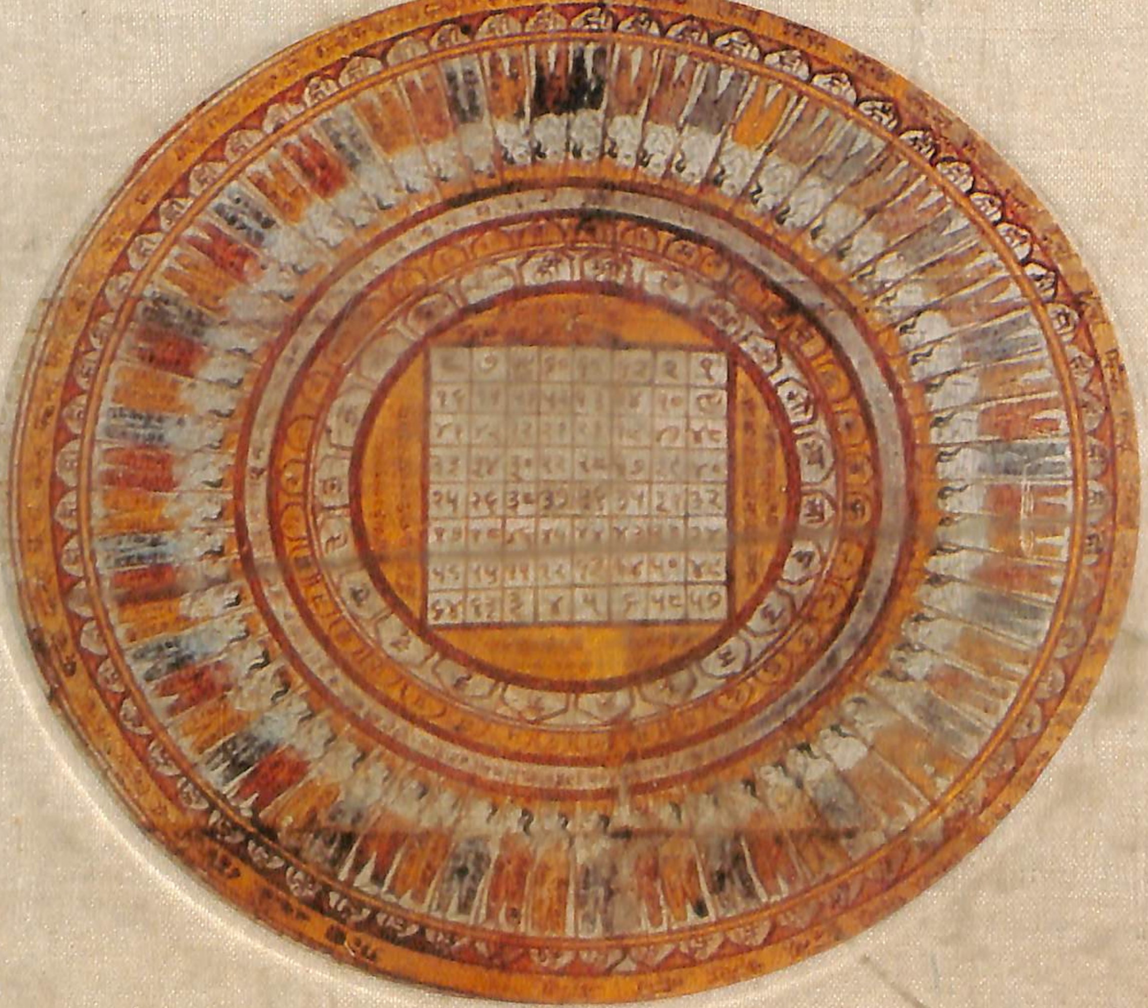
YOGINĪ
CULT AND TEMPLES
A TANTRIC TRADITION

VIDYA DEHEJIA



NATIONAL MUSEUM, JANPATH, NEW DELHI

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NATIONAL MUSEUM
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To
Meghāsinī

Contents

Acknowledgements viii

Preface ix

Introduction 1

Concepts and Cult

1. The Many Aspects of Yoginīs 11
2. The Circle and Cakras of Yoginīs 39
3. Occult Powers and Cult Practices 53

Yoginī Temples and Images

4. Origins and Spread of the Yoginī Cult 67
5. Sixty-four Yoginī Temples in Orissa 91
6. Sixty-four Yoginī Temples in Central India 115
7. Bheraghat: A Temple of Eighty-one Yoginīs 125
8. Temples of the Forty-two Yoginīs 141
9. Four Collections of Yoginīs from Central India 145
10. South Indian Yoginīs 175

Conclusion 185

Appendix I Yoginīs Including Mātṛkās 187

Appendix II Two Major Yoginī Traditions Excluding Mātṛkās 201

Appendix III Two Unfolding Formations of 64 Yoginīs 217

Notes 219

Bibliography 228

Index 237

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Preface

A simple circular enclosure with no roof and no hidden sanctum sanctorum, standing open to the sky and permitting the sunlight to pour into its exposed arena, is an unusual phenomenon for an Indian temple. Within the enclosure and placed in niches in its circular walls are a series of female images, generally sixty-four in number, with beautiful bodies but often with non-human heads. These shrines are referred to as Chaunsat (64) Yoginī temples; the cult that gave rise to them has remained a mystery and total ignorance surrounds their character and construction. Intrigued by the curious nature of these temples and their enigmatic images, I embarked on a study of the Yoginīs and their shrines, hoping to uncover the secrets of this mysterious cult.

Remains of this remarkable variety of temple are scattered over the northern part of India and with a few exceptions, they are located in sites remote and difficult of access. Most of the Yoginī temples were reported by Cunningham in his exploratory tours of the late 19th century, but few have been explored since. My travels into the less frequented parts of central India where robber-gangs known as dacoits are still active, led to interesting encounters. At Dudahi (which has a Yoginī temple) the villagers barricaded themselves in their huts fully convinced that I was the local dacoit queen, Hasina; while at the Yoginī site of Naresar, I discovered that following a successful kidnapping, the temples were frequently used by the dacoits as a safe and unknown shelter.

One reason why the Yoginīs and thier temples have been neglected may be due to the deep sense of fear and awe that they inspire in the average person. People generally refer to the Yoginīs in hushed tones, if at all they mention them. This secrecy is maintained to such an extent that the very existence of the Yoginī temple at Hirapur became public knowledge only as recently as the year 1953. It is quite amazing that this well-preserved shrine, barely ten miles from the major temple centre of Bhubanesvar, should have remained unknown all these years. There is a widespread apprehension that one may be cursed by the Yoginīs for a whole host of reasons and it is believed that even approaching too close to their temples may have disastrous consequences. This deepseated fear makes the average villager and even town-dweller steer clear of the Yoginī temple. He would rather not talk to you about Yoginī, much less lead you to one of thier shrines.

This dread of the Yoginīs seems to have been prevalent since ancient times. The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* which incorporates the well-known poem *Lalitā Sahasranāma* or "Thousand Names of Lalitā", concludes the section with the warning that anyone who so loses his wits as to impart the poem to a non-initiate will be cursed by the Yoginīs.[1] To incur the curse of the Yoginīs is regarded as a fate worse than death. The *Jñānārṇava Tantra* similarly tells us that a person transmitting sacred and secret knowledge to one who is uninitiated, will become food for the Yoginīs.[2] This attitude has probably been the cause for the Yoginī cult remaining such a well-guarded secret over the centuries.

Published material holds little of relevance to the Yoginī cult. Surveys of Indian art have generally ignored the Yoginīs and their temples.[3] To historians of architecture the simple, hypaethral shrines of the Yoginīs, lacking towers, gateways and decorative carvings, may have seemed insignificant in the context of the history of the Indian temple. It is surpising, however, that the exquisitely sculpted images of the Yoginīs in some of the temples have not attracted those interested in the development of Indian sculpture. More difficult to comprehend is the fact that neither iconographers[4] nor historians of Indian religion have paid any attention to a cult that was of notable consequence during the medieval period, judging from the considerable number of temples that still exist and others that have been destroyed. The cult of the Yoginīs has been ignored even in those works devoted entirely to the lesser known religious sects, as also in books devoted to the various forms of worship connected with the Great Goddess.[5] Even studies on tantra have by-passed the Yoginī temples in relative silence, ignoring this unique cult.[6]

Preliminary investigation having suggested the tantric character of Yoginī worship, I attempted to communicate with tantric *gurus,* hoping to gain from them an insight into these ancient, lost traditions. I found, however, that only those seeking initiation are welcome. While I considered the possibility of taking such a step, I soon realised that this would not be a practicable solution since in north India (in contrast to the south) such initiation would involve not only participation in rites of a decidedly dubious nature, but also the swearing of an oath of secrecy regarding all information imparted after initiation.

I turned hence to manuscript collections in various parts of the sub-continent, and it was after many months of persistent search that I finally came across manuscripts, both on paper and palm-leaf, that threw light on this hitherto neglected facet of medieval religion and culture. I have been able, of course, only to skim the surface of the vast quantity of material available in manuscript form. Apart from the numerous and often uncatalogued library collections, several families possess old and valuable manuscripts. In many parts of India, manuscripts are regarded with reverence, being worshipped together with the family gods beside whom they are placed. Frequently it is believed that these documents possess a certain potency; for instance, to this day when Orissan rivers are in spate, manuscripts are thrown into them to placate and appease the gods!

Information pertinent to the Yoginīs and the cult associated with them emerged ultimately both from a series of unknown and unpublished manuscripts, and from certain published Sanskrit texts which have not been, so far, systematically analysed. Details of these sources will be found in the Bibliography, but I would like to review briefly the material I have explored. Extant in manuscript form, in libraries at Varanasi, Baroda, Madras and elsewhere, are a number of Yoginī *nāmāvalīs* which are lists of names of the Yoginīs. Such name-lists are not preceded by any explanatory material and they usually end with a single verse stating that the Yoginīs should be worshipped devoutly. While several such *nāmāvalīs* exist, these give us little information on the Yoginīs or their cult, merely providing us with sets of names that rarely tally from one list to the next. Purāṇas referring to the Yoginīs usually incorporate such *nāmāvalīs,* and the *Agni Purāṇa* for instance contains two name-lists, as does the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the *Kālikā Purāṇa.* Two *nāmāvalīs* within the same Purāṇa (as in the case of the *Skanda Purāṇa)* often contain totally different lists of sixty-four names. However, a closer examination of these and other Purāṇic texts provides information on the character of the Yoginīs and clues to their relationship with the Great Goddess.

A group of manuscripts with titles such as *Yoginīpūjāvidhi* or "Manner of Worship of the Yoginīs" might appear, at first acquaintance, to contain material that would throw light on the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples. However, all these documents prove to be texts of the Śrī Vidyā cult, and the Yoginīs of its Śrī Cakra belong to a category apart from these we are considering. Such manuscripts may then be discounted in our present study. The same applies to a class of texts found in most manuscript libraries, entitled *Yoginīdaśā:* these are works of astrological significance only. Historical romances and semi-historical literature such as Somadevasuri's *Yaśastilaka* (A.D. 959), Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (c. 1150) and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (c. 1070) contain tales about Yoginīs. A close scrutiny of these stories in the original Sanskrit indicates that while most such accounts are about human witches, a few portray the Yoginīs as goddesses and thus provide us with relevant material.

It is, however, from tantras belonging to the Kaula school that really significant information on the Yoginīs and the cult associated with them may be culled. The language in which these tantras are written is by no means straightforward; in fact, these documents are often couched in an intentional abstruse language called *sandhā bhāṣā,* clear only to the initiate. Cults associated with tantra are esoteric by nature and initiation through a *guru* is essential. Since the *guru* introduces the initiate to the secrets of the cult, there is no necessity for explicit statements in the written texts. Kaula tantras then refer to the Yoginīs without clear explanatory statements on the position held by these goddesses, obviously assuming that such basic facts would be known already to their readers. The *Kulārṇava,* one of the best known tantras of the Kaula school, gives us valuable clues to the status of the Yoginīs and indicates their prominence among followers of the Kaula path. Published with selected English readings which do not mention the term Yoginī, the *Kulārṇava Tantra,* in its original Sanskrit text, clearly contains numerous references to the Yoginīs. A series of such references are found, on analysis, to be highly enlightening. The tantric text *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* which belongs to a school that calls itself Yoginī Kaula is also noteworthy.

The hitherto unknown and unstudied *Śrī Matottara Tantra* provides us with extremely important information on the Yoginī cult. The *Matottara,* listed in certain traditions as one of the original sixty-four tantras, ends each chapter with a reference to its doctrine as *Yoginīguhya* meaning "Secret of the Yoginīs". Written in Sanskrit, this tantra exists in the Nepal National Archives in over thirty manuscript copies in both the Newari and Devanāgarī scripts, of which the earliest version dated in the text itself, belongs to the Newari year 729 or A.D. 1609. My study of this tantra is based on a complete version written in the Devanāgarī script (No. 4/2506). Not unknown in India proper, the *Matottara Tantra* is the original of the so-called *Gorakṣa Saṁhitā* published in its incomplete form by the Sanskrit University at Varanasi. In this later version, it is repeatedly stated that this esoteric knowledge has not been told elsewhere except in the *Śrī Matottara (anya tantram mayā guptam kathitam śrīmatottare),* and each chapter ends with the statement that the text is of the Kaula school. Janardan Pandeya who edited the *Gorakṣa Saṁhitā* is of the opinion that the manuscript is approximately four hundred years old. The text of the *Saṁhitā* may, however, have been composed much earlier, which would indicate that the original *Matottara* was composed earlier still.

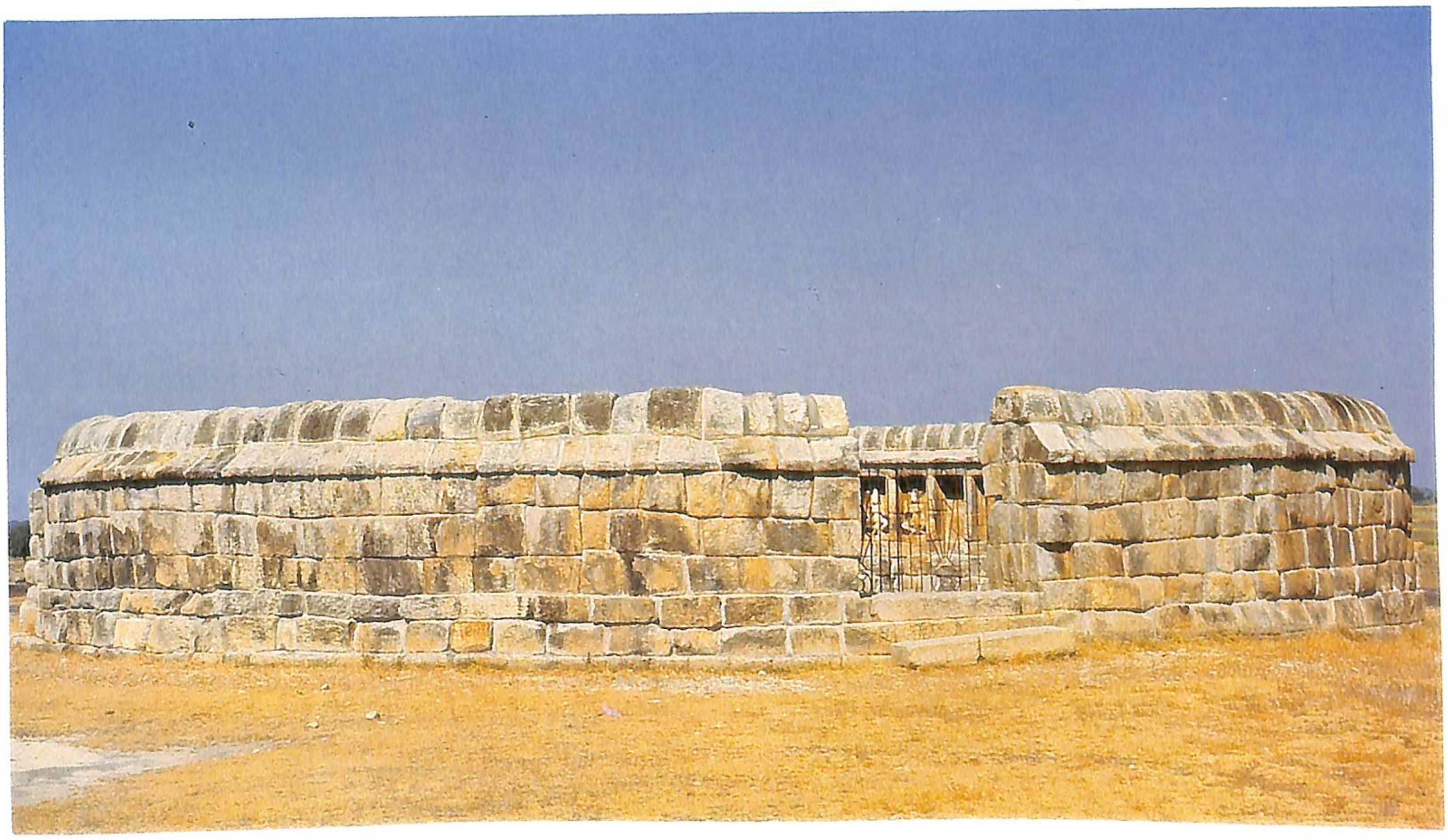
Taking the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Devī Kubjikā, the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* is in the nature of a compendium of *cakras* (ritual circles), the origin and significance of each being explained in an independent chapter, together with instructions for its diagrammatic presentation. Of special relevance to Yoginīs are four *cakras* detailed in this text; the *Khecarī Cakra* and the *Yoginī Cakra* are both circles of sixty-four Yoginīs; the *Mūla Cakra* is a grouping of eighty-one Yoginīs; and the *Mālinī Cakra* is a circle of fifty goddesses. The *Matottara* intimates that the aim of Yoginī worship is the acquisition of a variety of occult powers and it also gives an indication of the ritual practices associated with the cult.

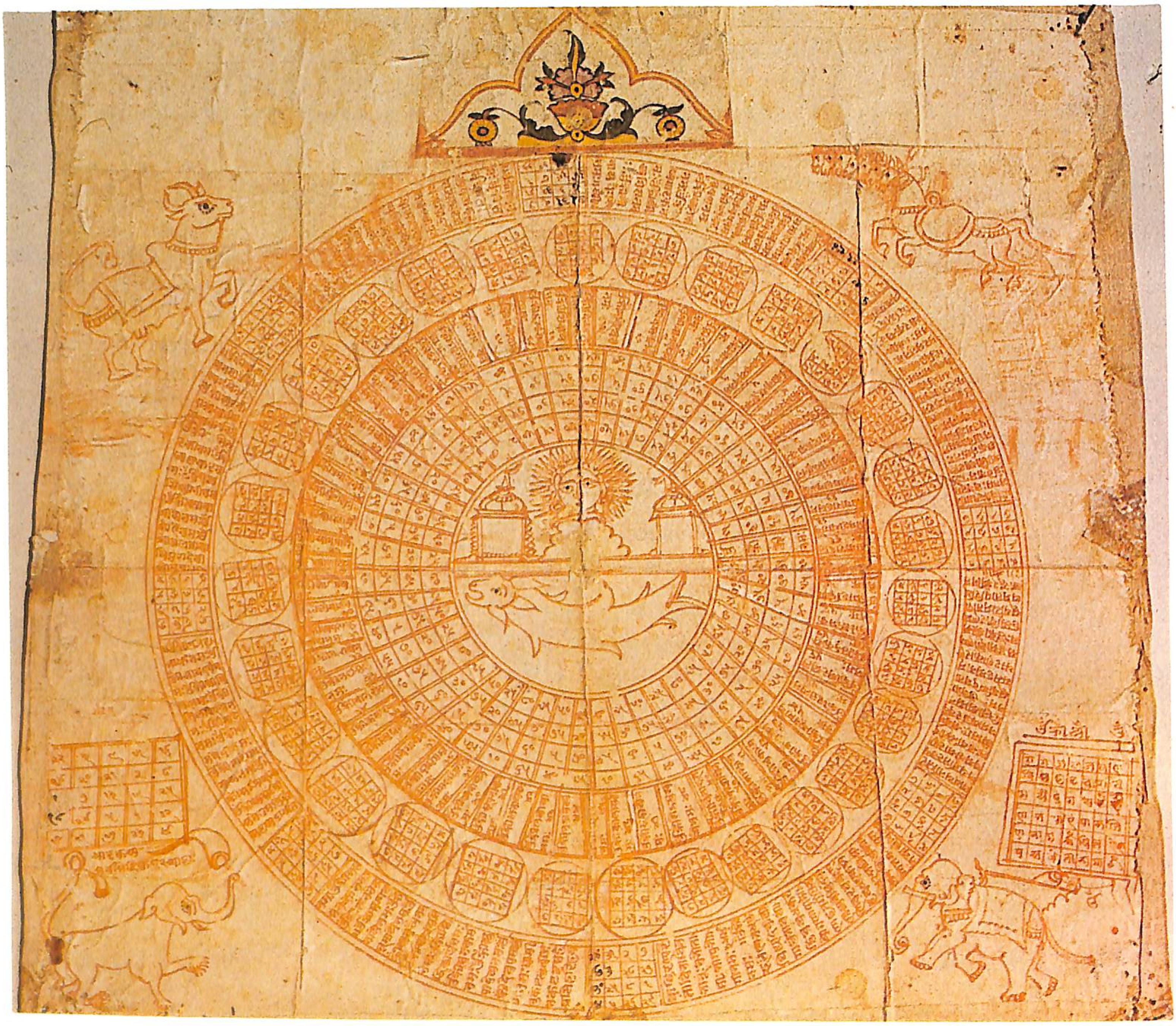
It appears that the worship of the Yoginīs, most frequently in a group of sixty-four, was one of the significant, though less familiar, cults practised by the Śāktas who believed in the supremacy of Śakti or Power concentrated in the person of the Great Goddess.

Introduction

The entire phenomenon of Yoginī worship, and the construction of temples dedicated to this group of goddesses, has its roots outside the fold of the orthodox Brahmanical tradition. The Yoginī cult, definitely tantric in nature and tantra itself, with primitive ideas on the efficacy of magical rituals and spells, sounds and gestures, is a movement that has deep connections with rural and tribal traditions. If we are to look for the origins of the Yoginīs, it appears that we must turn to the simple village cults and to the *grāma devatās,* the local village goddesses. In the villages of India, these are the favoured deities, the major Brahmanical gods being of lesser importance. Each *grāma devatā,* be she Manakkal Nangai or Chilka Kalijai, presides over the welfare of her village. Frequently she has a special boon to confer, for instance, Kolaramma (Mother of Kolar) grants freedom from scorpion sting to those who propitiate her. These village goddesses seem to have been gradually transformed and consolidated into potent numerical groupings of

Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial, Orissa

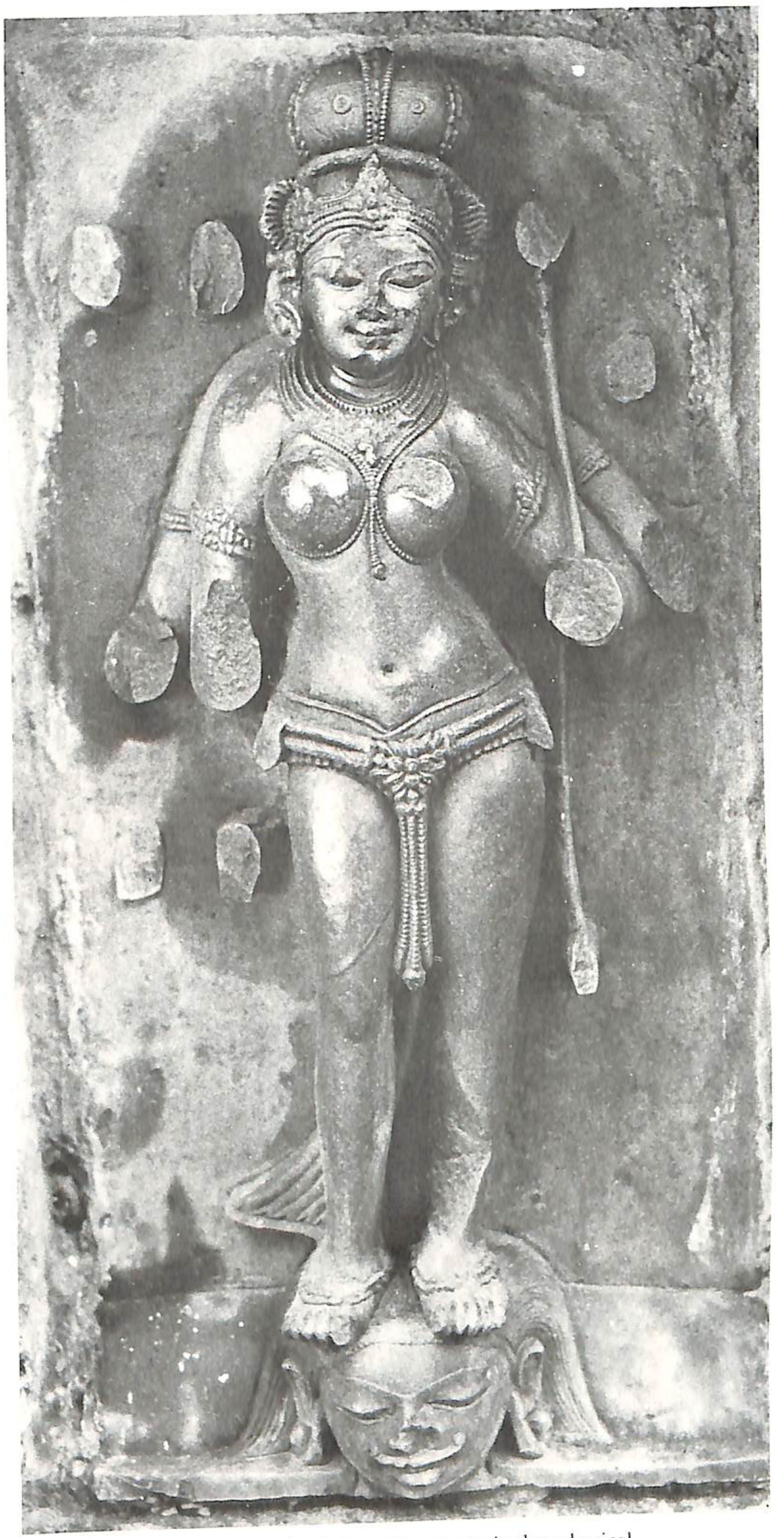




Yoginī Cakra on paper, Rajasthan, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)

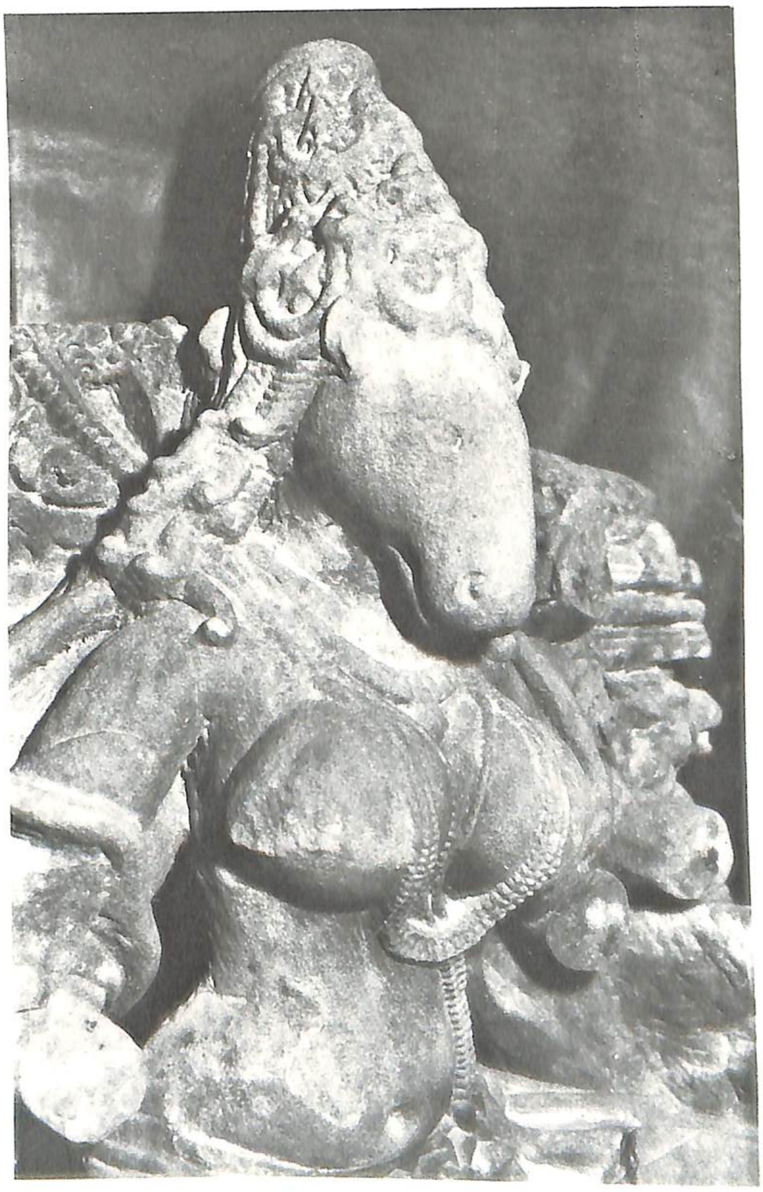
sixty-four (sometimes of eighty-one, sometimes of forty-two), acquiring thereby a totally different character. It was tantrism that elevated these local deities and gave them new form and vigour as a group of goddesses who could bestow magical powers on their worshippers. The philosophy, rituals and cultus of these deities along with others that were originally non-Brahmanical, were brought together under the rubric Tantra and thus given legitimacy in later Hinduism.

In plan the Yoginī temple is generally in the form of a circle *(cakra)* with sixty-four divisions known in the texts as rays *(ara)* or petals *(dala)*. Several cloth and paper *cakras* of this type have come to light with their segments numbered from 1 to 64, each containing the name, and sometimes the drawing of a Yoginī. The Yoginīs placed along the inner walls of the open, roofless temples are usually depicted as beautiful-bodied women with rounded breasts, slender waist and broad hips, wearing a skirt held in position by a jewelled girdle placed low on the hips. They are ornamented with necklaces and garlands, with armlets, bangles,



Yoginī from Hirapur temple, Orissa (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Horse-headed Yoginī from Shahdol, Dhubela Museum

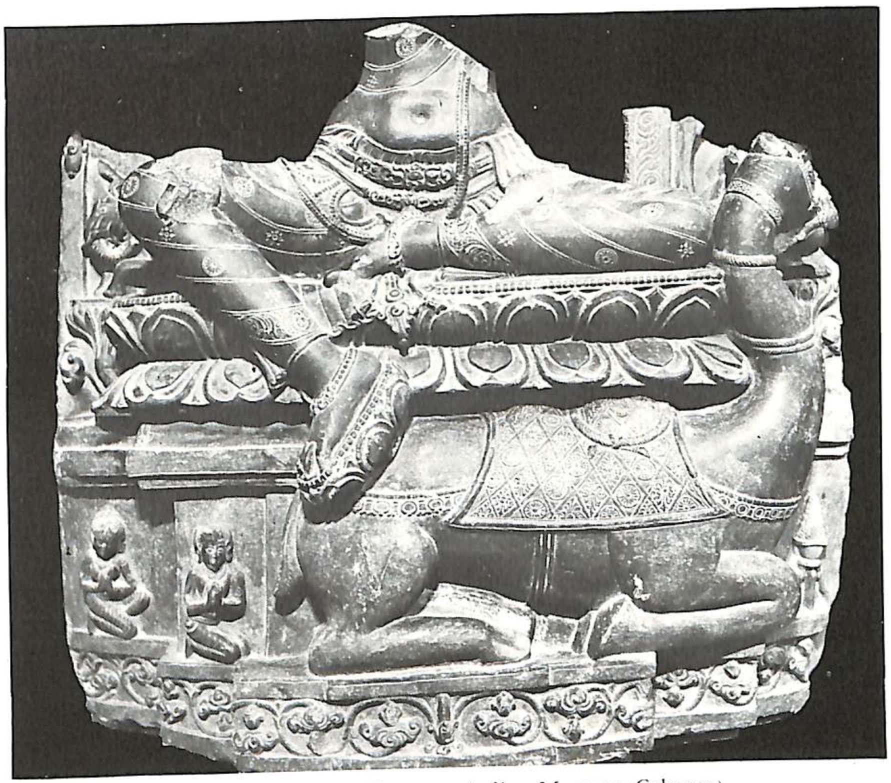


anklets,earrings and elaborate headdresses. Several have exquisitely delineated faces to correspond with their curvacious bodies. However, the Yoginīs present us with a number of widely varying countenances, some of which are clearly non-human. One Yoginī has the face of a horse, but the animal head scarcely detracts from her sensuality and nubility. A second Yoginī has the gentle face of a rabbit with prominently alerted ears. A third Yoginī has a well formed female body, but in place of her face is a large snake hood that makes her a bizarre and arresting figure. A fourth is of fearsome mien with a skeletal body that reveals her rib-cage and prominent tendons, a sunken stomach and elongated, sagging breasts. Wearing a garland of human skulls, she holds a severed human head in one hand, a curved knife in another, and with two more hands she holds aloft the carcass of a tiger.

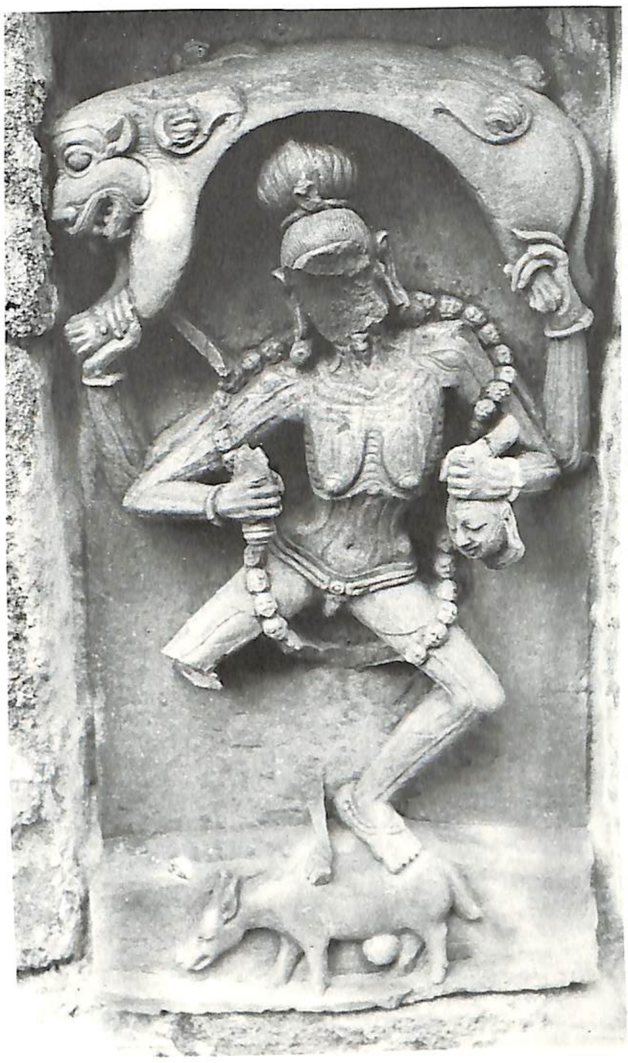
These simple temples of the Yoginīs with their shapely, enigmatic images pose many questions. Who are the Yoginīs sculpted in these circular enclosures and what position do they occupy within the vast and complex Hindu pantheon? What was the purpose in the construction of these open circular temples? Who were the people who worshipped at these shrines and what manner of ritual was conducted within such enclosures? These are problems which have never been considered and to which we shall address ourselves in the course of the present study.

Snake-headed Yoginī from Lokhari (see colour picture on p. 158)

Rabbit-headed Yoginī from Lokhari (see colour picture on p. 157)



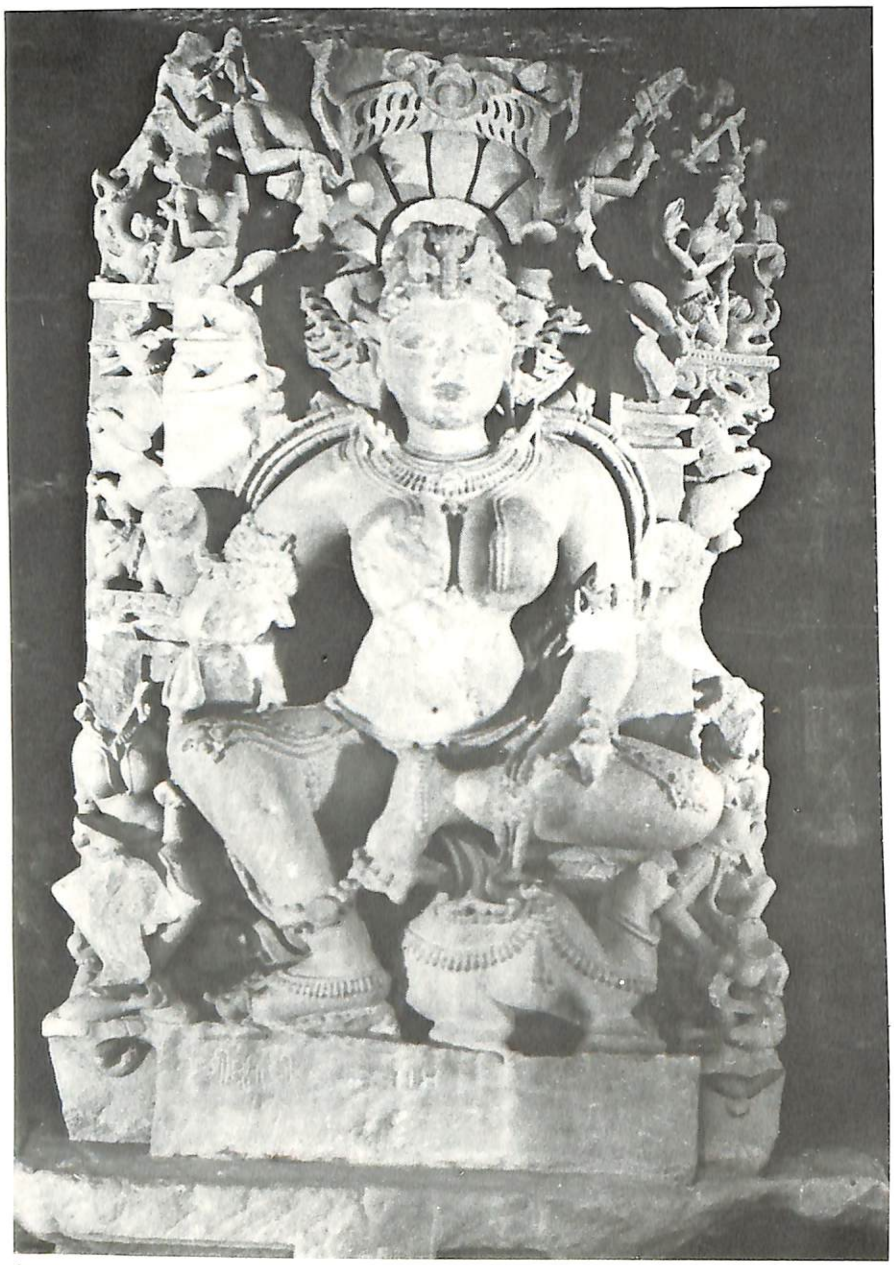
Sena goddess with camel *vāhana* (Courtesy: Indian Museum, Calcutta)



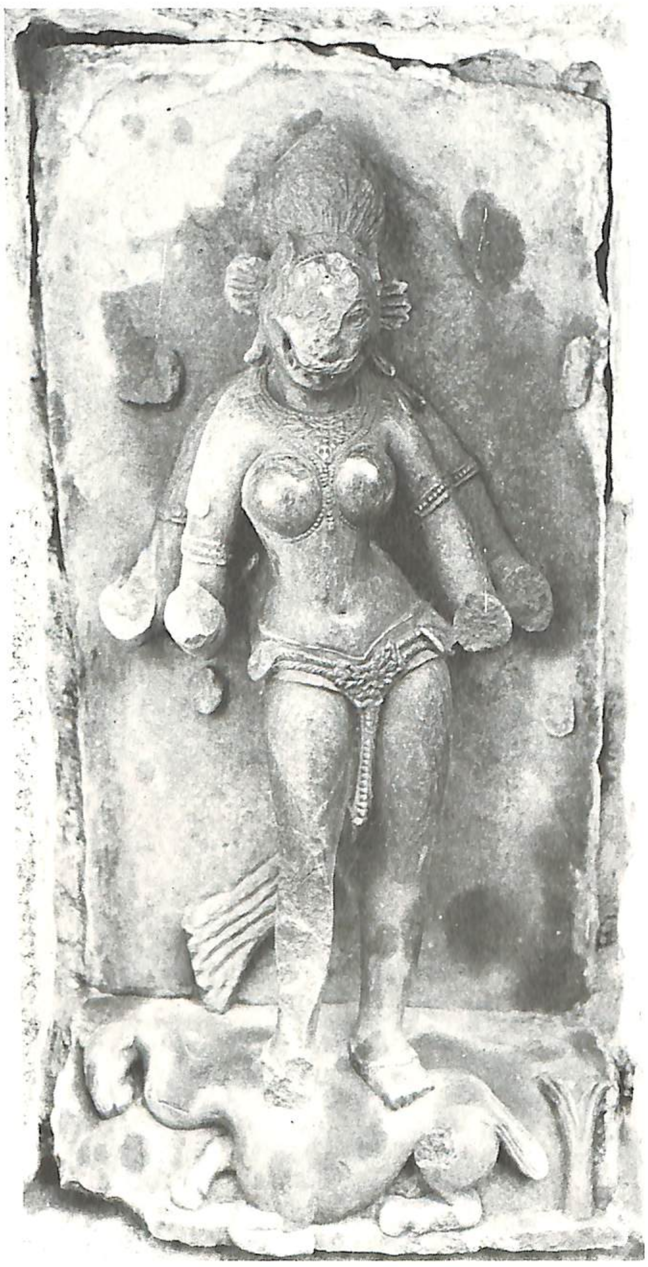
Emaciated Yoginī from Hirapur temple

The main preoccupation of scholars so far has been a time-consuming concern with giving each Yoginī a name. Let me state at the outset that the entire process of identifying the Yoginīs in the different temples and assigning names to them seems a somewhat meaningless enterprise. The groups of Yoginīs in the various temples do not correspond one with the other; there are not the same number or type of animal-headed, grotesque-looking or gentle and beautiful deities in each temple; the proportion of animal-headed to totally human Yoginīs varies, as does their precise positioning within a temple. There are only a few common figures that may be identified from one temple to another, and it certainly appears that each group of Yoginīs sculpted in each shrine represents a localised and independent tradition.

A brief consideration of textual lists of Yoginīs is indicated as these have generally been considered to be prime source material. Ancient religious literature has provided us to date with some half a dozen lists of the sixty-four Yoginīs, and our examination of several unpublished manuscripts and of hitherto unknown paper and cloth *cakras* now helps to increase this number to thirty. Seldom do these *nāmāvalīs* (name-lists) correspond one with the other. But what is even more frustrating is the fact that the names of the Yoginīs given in these textual lists are quite different from those that occur on the one or two sets of inscribed images. A study of these many differing Yoginī *nāmāvalīs* has led us to divide the lists into two broad categories on the basis of whether the sixty-four names include or exclude those important deities, the Mātṛkās. Such a classification appears to have a sound basis. The tradition that includes the Mātṛkās regards the Yoginīs as highly placed deities and often as aspects of the Divine, while the tradition excluding Mātṛkās generally considers the Yoginīs as cruel, fierce and wrathful and more in the nature of minor attendant deities. A detailed analysis of such lists may be found in Appendix I and II.



Śrī-Yākinī with camel *vāhana* from Bheraghat temple

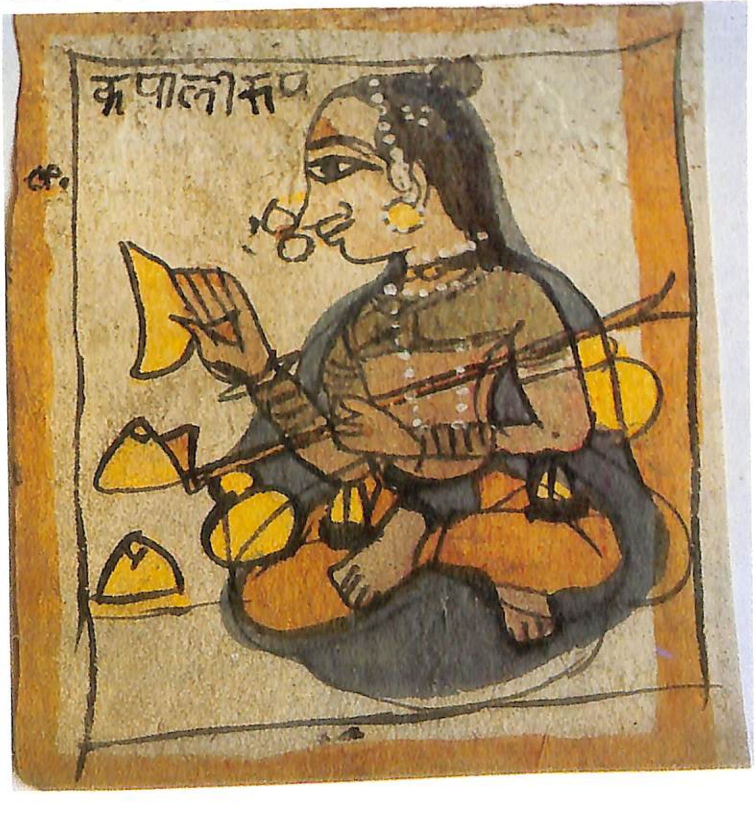


Yoginī on camel from Hirapur temple

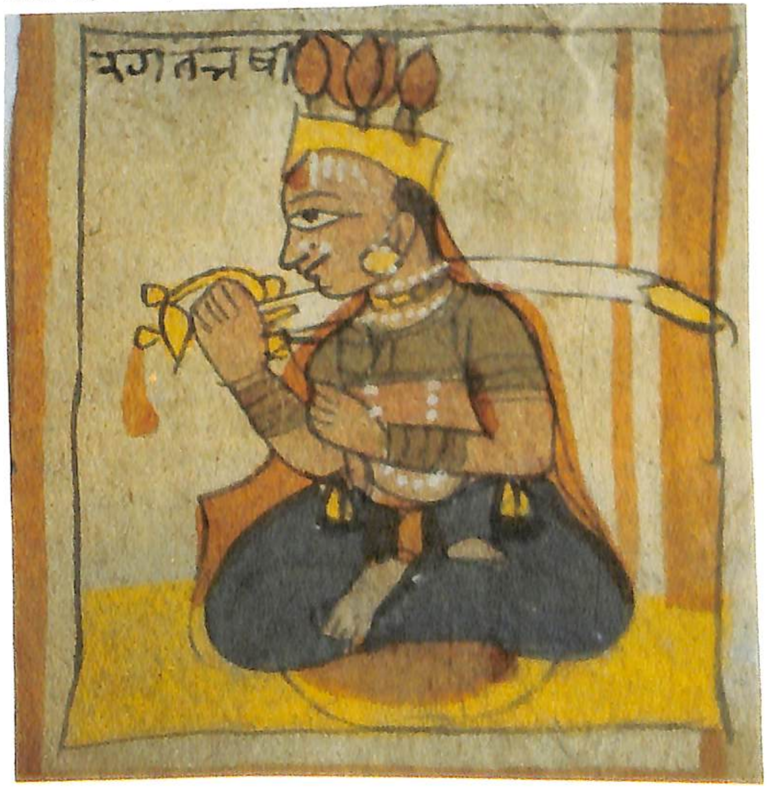
From this plethora of available lists, can one use a specific list to identify the Yoginīs of any one temple? Lists providing similar names often differ significantly in the *vāhanas* (mounts) used by each Yoginī. Until the present, the only known source for the description of the Yoginīs was Hemadri's 13th century work, *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi,* and hence scholars depended on him to identify the images. For instance,when an exquisitely carved Sena fragment of a goddess with a camel was discovered, she was named Vikratā, following Hemadri. But the situation is somewhat different with the discovery of other textual descriptions. We find that the *Matottara Tantra* names the Yoginī with the camel, Kālakarṇī, while to further confuse the situation, the camel-accompanied Yoginī sculpted at Bheraghat is labelled Śrī Yākinī (Thakini ?). Thus, when we find a Yoginī with a camel at Hirapur, do we name her Vikratā, Kālakarṇī or Yākinī ? It becomes apparent that no single textual tradition may be relied upon in identifying the Yoginīs of any one temple, unless we have reason to believe that a particular text was followed in the area, and are convinced that the sculptors had been instructed to model their figures on those specific textual prescriptions. Since such circumstances do not exist, we shall set aside the preoccupation with names as a fruitless diversion.

Extant remains suggest that the cult of the Yoginīs was of impelling and vital significance from the 9th to the 12th centuries, while later inscriptions added to certain Yoginī temples indicate that the shrines were in worship even in the early 16th century. We do not know exactly when the Yoginī cult lost its following or why its temples were abandoned. It appears, however, that the 17th and 18th centuries so totally wiped out memories of the cult that when the ruined temples were rediscovered in the late 19th century, few clues remained as to the significance of the Yoginīs or the reason for their worship. A legend prevalent in central India, which gives a fanciful explanation for a local Yoginī temple, clearly shows that the cult had been completely forgotten in this region. The amusing story tells of a batallion of British soldiers chasing a group of local belles who fled in terror to the top of a nearby hill. There they appealed to their patron goddess who, in her compassion, turned them to stone!

And yet, it is evident that the Yoginīs exerted a powerful imaginative appeal, for folk-style paintings of these goddesses continued to be made in the region of Rajasthan up to the turn of the present century. Paintings of Yoginī *cakras* also testify to the continuity of a tradition which paid at least token homage to the Yoginīs. The depiction of Yoginīs in such relatively recent works of art seem to speak of an innate reluctance to abandon a cult with ancient roots. Certainly, to the Indian mind, it would seem unnecessary to discard the old and the traditional. Perhaps there also lurks a vague fear of the possible ill consequence that might accrue from such an inauspicious rejection.



Yoginī Kapālī (She of the Skull-cup), folk-style painting from Rajasthan, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)

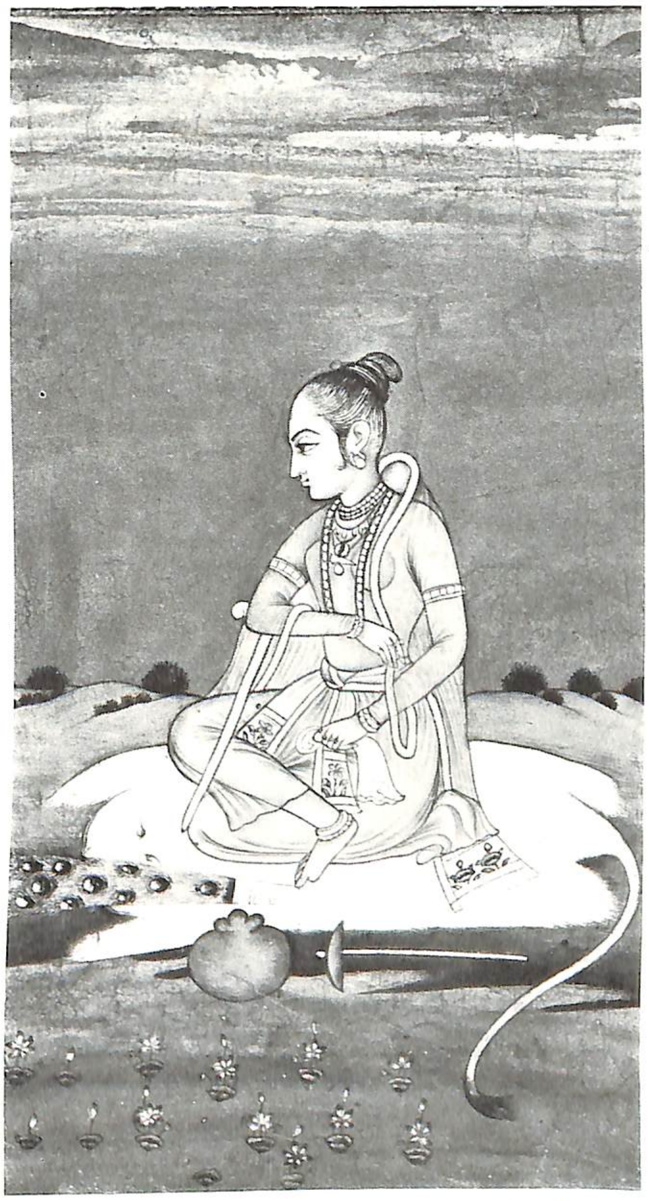


Yoginī Ragatabhaṣī (Drinker of blood), folk-style painting from Rajasthan, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)

Concepts and Cult

1. The Many Aspects of Yoginīs

The word *yoginī* allows of a number of different interpretations, each being entirely at variance with the next and yet quite correct in its own context. Sanskrit dictionaries give the following meanings: female devotee; sorceress or witch; fairy; attendants of Durgā; a name of Durgā. The word Yoginī is given yet another connotation by the Nepali Buddhist who uses it to denote the consort of any god, specially in those works of art where a god is copulating with the goddess. Each of these possible definitions is of varying significance and has totally different implications. Can any of these diverse interpretations of the term be applied exclusively to the figures in the Yoginī temples, or do these Yoginīs belong in a category apart?



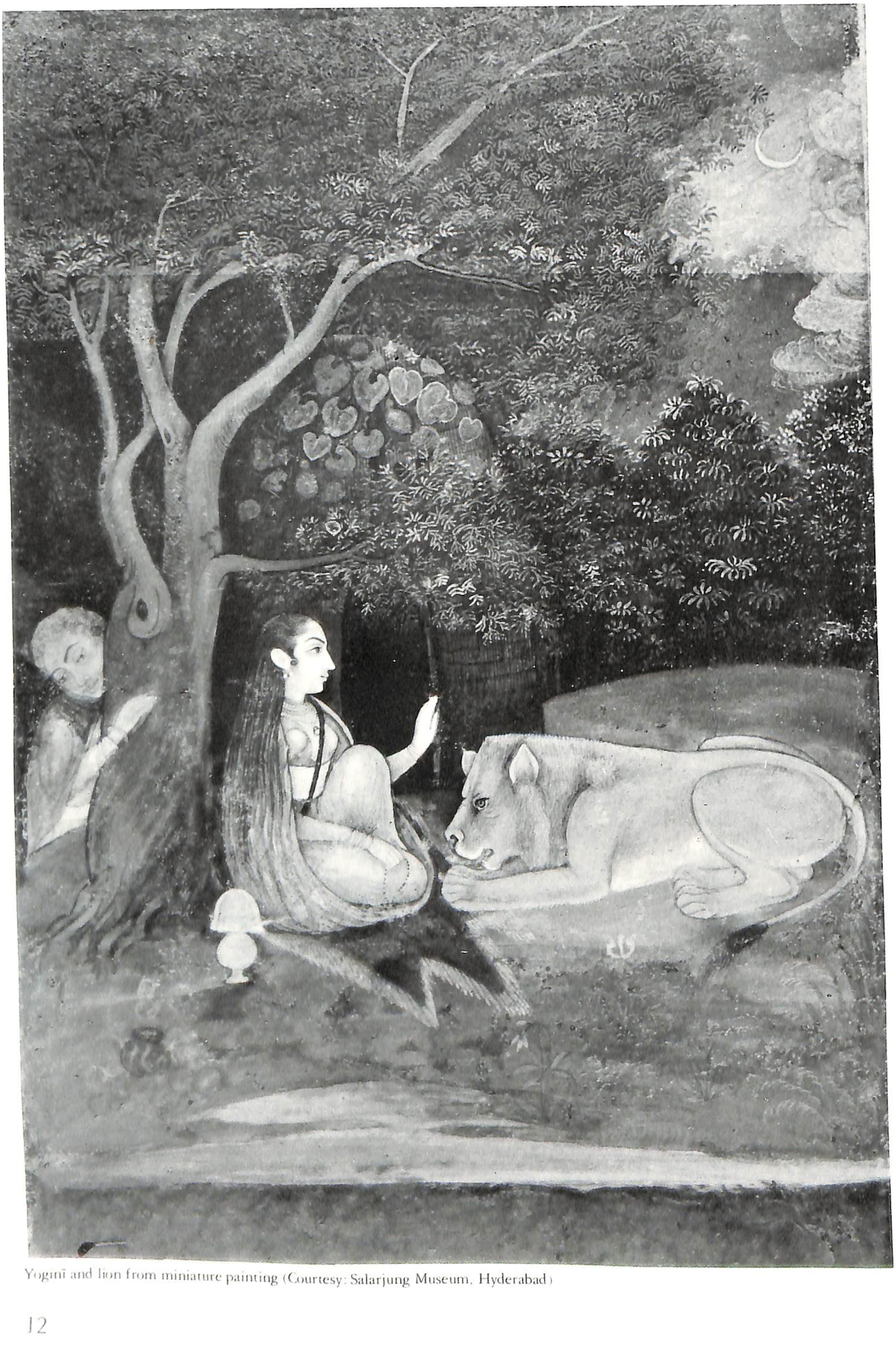
Yoginī from miniature painting (Courtesy: Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad)

Yoginī as an adept in Yoga

The simplest explanation of the term Yoginī is that she is the female counterpart of a Yogī. Just as a Yogī is a man who follows the path of Yoga as a bodily and spiritual discipline and becomes a master in the science, acquiring certain powers in the process, so too the woman who follows this path is a Yoginī. In both Mughal and Rajput paintings, these human Yoginīs are frequently portrayed either as ascetic mendicants or as seated in shrines where they are visited by both male and female devotees. One such miniature painting depicts a nocturnal forest scene with a Yoginī seated under a tree and a lion paying homage to her. Through long years of the practice of Yoga, the Yoginī acquires extraordinary powers which are often of a magical nature. These include complete control over breathing and other bodily functions, levitation, and as indicated in the painting, control over living creatures. Another miniature depicts a beautiful Yoginī seated upon a lion skin, with her walking stick, umbrella, fly-whisk of peacock feathers and bundle of possessions place beside her. Like the Yogīs, the Yoginīs have no fixed place of residence and wander the countryside, acquiring followers and teaching them the difficult path of Yoga. These, however, are different and not the Yoginīs of our Yoginī temples.

Yoginī as partner in Cakra-pūjā

In the form of tantric tradition known as Kaula mārga, the Yoginī is the woman who participates with the initiate in the secret practices of the cult including the rite involving *maithuna* or copulation. In recent years, with the publication of a number of books on tantra, the more esoteric aspects of the cult have become



Yoginī and lion from miniature painting (Courtesy: Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad) fairly common knowledge. The left-handed mode of tantric worship involves offering to the Goddess, *matsya* (fish), *māṁsa* (meat), *mudrā* (parched grain), *madya* (Liquor) and *maithuna* (sexual intercourse). Naturally the *sādhaka* or aspirant is also expected to partake of all these, and rites involving these five elements are essential for followers of the Kaula path. Kaula texts such as the *Kaulāvalīnirṇaya* tell us that for a Kaula *sādhaka,* there is no higher means for the attainment of liberation and happiness than *maithuna.* The text tells us that by this fifth element alone does the *sādhaka* attain all perfections. Anticipating critical comment, it informs us that those who perform these rites to please the god-head incur no sin. Ordinary prohibitions do not apply to the *sādhaka* who seeks liberation: "Such a man seeks Śakti in wine and Śiva in flesh and enjoying these, is conscious of himself as Bhairava"[1]

A basic element of this type of Kaula ritual is the formation of a Yoginī Cakra (circle), also known as a Kaula Cakra or a Bhairavī Cakra, and of worship therein. In such a Cakra, initiates sit in a circle, each accompanied by a female partner known usually as a Yoginī. Couples are paired impersonally and the *Kulārṇava Tantra* specifies that under no circumstances should a *sādhaka* force himself upon a Yoginī, nor may he ever speak ill of her.[2] The texts classify the Yoginīs of such a Cakra into different categories and they often specify the type of women best suited to be yoginīs. Within such a Kaula circle, there is no distinction of caste and each participant is considered equal in rank to a Brahmin for the duration of the rite. When the Cakra is dissolved each reverts to his or her own caste. Each man in the circle is considered as Śiva and each woman as the goddess for as long as the Cakra remains formed. The drinking of each cup of wine is accompanied by the recitation of a *mantra,* and while the ordinary *sādhaka* should not drink more than five cups of wine, we are told that the more advanced may consume up to seven cups. The culmination of the rite comes when the Yoginī, as the earthly representative of the goddess, receives the male as the earthly equivalent of Śiva. *Maithuna* is the crowning ceremony of this tantric ritual. This Yoginī too is not the Yoginī of the Yoginī temples.

Yoginī as sorceress

Ancient Indian literature contains many stories about witchcraft and about the magical powers acquired through the practice of certain types of pseudo-religious rites. The possessors of such occult powers are variously termed Yoginī, Ḍākinī and Sākinī, and the stories highlight the awe and dread with which they were regarded.

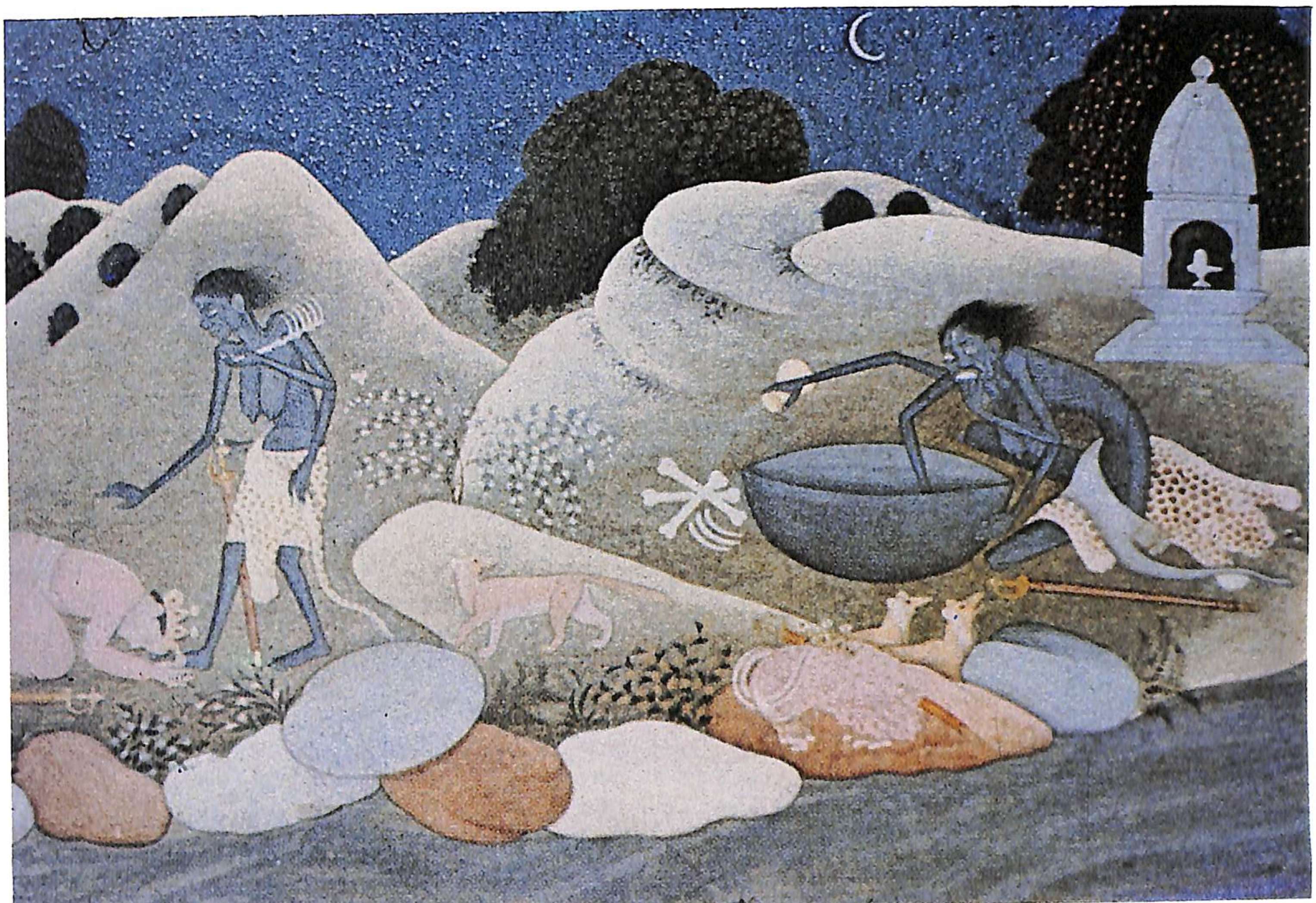
One reason the Yoginīs evoked fear was because it was believed they had the power to transform human beings into animals and birds with the aid of a magic thread. The *Uttamacaritrakathānaka* narrates the story of a courtesan named Anaṅgasenā who fell in love with the prince Uttamacaritra. Anaṅgasenā was in fact a Yoginī and she was able to get possession of the prince by tying a charmed thread around his neck and converting him into a parrot. Whenever she wished to enjoy the pleasures of love, she temporarily removed the thread and the prince regained his human form.[3] The *Kathāsaritsāgara* contains several similar stories of Yoginīs who converted men into animals by tying these magical strings around their necks. One tale tells of a Yoginī named Sukhāśayā who taught her friend Bandhudatta a spell by which she could convert her lover into a monkey and thus be enabled to take him with her on a long trip she was forced to make. A second story tells of a Yoginī named Somadā who, angry with her lover, put a magic string around his neck and converted him into an ox. It was Yoginī, Bandhamocinī who released him from the spell.[4]

Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* contains a fascinating tale about the power of the Yoginīs in its story of the minister Sandhimat who was murdered by king Jayendra, and whose bones were placed in the cemetery by *Guru* Īśāna who had been told that Sandhimat would be resurrected.

> "And so, at midnight, Īśāna, who had lost his sleep owing to the anxiety about that miracle, smelt the perfume of divine incense. He heard an uncanny sound of the clang of many cymbals and bells struck violently and the loud din of tambourines. On opening the window he then saw Yoginīs *(yoginīcakra)* standing inside a halo of light. Noticing their excitement and that the skeleton had been removed, the startled Īśāna proceeded to the funeral ground with a drawn sword.
>
> Thus he saw hidden by a tree that the skeleton, which had been placed recumbent in the centre of their troupe, was being modelled with all the limbs by the troupe of Yoginīs.
>
> With the rising tide of desire for sensual enjoyment with a lover, the Yoginīs, drunk with liquor, having failed to find a virile man, had sought out the skeleton and had carried it away.
>
> Each different limb was furnished from their own limbs and having from somewhere brought the male organ, in a moment, they thus set him up complete with all the limbs. Next, the spirit of Sandhimat which had been wandering about not having taken possession of another body, the Yoginīs having attracted by Yoga placed it therein. Then, as he was being massaged with divine emollients, he awoke as if from sleep and, at will, as the leader of the troupe, he had with them the joy in the way of love.[5]"

The story ends with the statement that this Yogeśvarī circle then vanished,[6] indicating that the terms Yoginī and Yogeśvarī could be used interchangeably. The powers assigned to these Yoginīs seem to indicate that they were not entirely human witches, but partook rather of the nature of supernatural creatures.

The *Kathāsaritsāgara* story of Padmāvatī tells of a circle of Yoginīs *(yoginīcakra)* from all quarters who had collected together in a cemetery. These intoxicated Yoginīs produced the young son of king Karṇotpala with his heart laid bare, and placed the corpse in the centre of the circle they had formed, to serve as an offering to their god Bhairava.[7] Yoginīs also had the power to fly through the air. It would appear from such stories that the Yoginīs met periodically in cemeteries where they formed a circle and collectively offered a human victim to their god Śiva as Bhairava. In



Yoginīs in cemetery, 18th century painting (Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi)

order to bring about the required results, it appears that a magic ritual often involved human sacrifice. Mircea Eliade mentions the persistence of the belief that Yoginīs feed on human flesh and transform themselves into birds when it is necessary to cross a river.[8]

The story of Yoginī Saudāmanī related in Bhavabhūti's drama *Mālatīmādhava* further clarifies the cult practices of these witches. The drama relates how Yoginī Saudāmanī flies into Padmāvatī, a town located near Agra, from the tantric centre of Śrīparvata in the southern state of Andhra. Saudāmanī is said to be observing the vow of a Kāpālika on Śrīparvata[9] thus indicating that the Yoginīs as sorceress belonged to the Kāpālika fold. The Kāpālikas were a heterodox sect of Śaivism whose cult practices included the partaking of meat and wine to be consumed from *kapālas* or skull-bowls, the eating of human flesh, the indulgence in human sacrifice, and the performance of various rites connected with corpses. There was also a strong erotic content involved in Kāpālika ritual.[10]

Other stories tell of the category of witches called *ḍākinīs,* who had the ability to fly in the air, and initiation into whose fold involved the eating of human flesh. Details about these *ḍākinīs* are contained in the story of queen Kuvalayavatī in the *Kathāsaritasāgara.* The king, returning unexpectedly from an expedition, finds his queen:

> "stark naked, with her hair standing on end and her lips trembling in muttering charms, in the midst of a great circle *(mahāmaṇḍalamadhyagām)* strewed with various coloured powders, after offering a horrible oblation of blood, spirits and human flesh."

The queen confesses to being a Ḍākinī and explains that this ritual enables her to fly in the air. On being questioned as to how this had come to pass, she tells of having witnessed women flying in the air. When she asked them how to obtain this power of *khecara* (moving in the air), she was told that she must be willing to consume human flesh. On indicating her agreement, she was initiated into the fold by the chief Ḍākinī, Kālarātri. The queen relates:

> "she made me take off my clothes and perform, standing in a circle *(maṇḍala)*, a horrible ceremony in honour of Śiva in his terrific form, and after she had sprinkled me with water, she gave me various spells known to her, and human flesh to eat that had been offered in sacrifice to the gods; so, after I had eaten man's flesh and had received the various spells, I immediately flew up, naked as I was, into the heaven with my friends *(ḍākinīcakra)* and after I had amused myself, I descended from the heaven by command of my teacher, and I, the princess, went to my own apartments. Thus, even in my girlhood I became one of the society of witches *(ḍākinīcakra)*, and in our meetings we devoured the bodies of many men."[11]

The *Kathāsaritsāgara,* in an independent description of Bhairava, refers to him as one dear to the Ḍākinīs *(ḍākinīpriyam),*[12] further confirming that the worship of Bhairava was an important part of Ḍākinī ritual.

The *Vetālapañcaviṁśati* also contains stories about these Ḍākinīs. One such story tells us how, at midnight, in the pitch darkness of the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month, a beautiful Ḍākinī consumed the dead young son of king Karṇotpala and then left the cemetery carrying liquor in his skull.[13] This story indicates, incidentally, that the word Ḍākinī was sometimes used interchangeably with Yoginī. The slightly varying version of this same story of king Karṇotpala's son that is contained in the *Kathāsaritsāgara,* refers as we have seen, to Yoginīs, while the *Vetālapañcaviṁśati* uses instead the term Ḍākinī.

The third category of these ascetic-cum-witches was the Sākinī who, like the Yoginī, could transform men into animals. Instead of the Yoginī's magic thread, the Sākinī used magic grains. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* contains many stories of Sākinīs and of the *mantras* used by them to obtain the special powers by which they were able to thus transform humans into animals. In the story of Bhīmaparākrama, the Sākinī turns a man into a goat.[14] She takes corn and other grain which she sows at midnight in a corner of her own house; these grow immediately and she plucks, roasts and pounds them and places them in a copper pot. She then chants certain mysterious *mantras* over the grains to infuse them with magical qualities and these aid her in her rite of transformation. The *Daśakumāracarita* tells the story of Nitambavatī who was convicted of being a Sākinī. The story expresses the idea that

Sākinis acquired their magical powers by devouring human flesh from corpses that they often dragged off funeral pyres.[15]

Yoginīs, Ḍākinīs and Sākinīs had acquired the ability to move in the air and they possessed the power of transforming human beings into animals and birds. The stories indicate that they moved about in aerial groups, that they visited cemeteries and that they worshipped Bhairava with magical formulae. Circular formations (*cakras* and *maṇḍalas*), nudity and the consumption of human flesh seem to have been considered an integral part of the rites of these witches. As Bhavabhūti's story of Yoginī Saudāmanī indicates, these sorceresses followed the unorthodox path and practices of the Kāpālikas. While these witch-Yoginīs appear to possess certain characteristics that link them with the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples, they too are of a category apart.

Yoginīs of Astrology

Astrological works contain references to eight Yoginīs named Maṅgalā, Piṅgalā, Dhanyā, Bhramarī, Bhadrikā, Ulakā, Siddhidā and Sankaṭā. There are a number of manuscripts entitled *Yoginīdaśā,* the term *daśā* referring to the particular positioning of stars and planets at the birth of an individual.[16] The eight Yoginīs are associated with the nine *grahas* or planets, the texts telling us that the eighth Yoginī Saṅkaṭā is to be linked with two of the *grahas*. Details are given of the fate of individuals born under each *yoginīdaśā,* and since these *daśās* are of recurring order, we are told the significance of the recurrence of each at various stages of the life of an individual. One verse refers thus to the positioning of a specific Yoginī at the start of a pilgrimage:

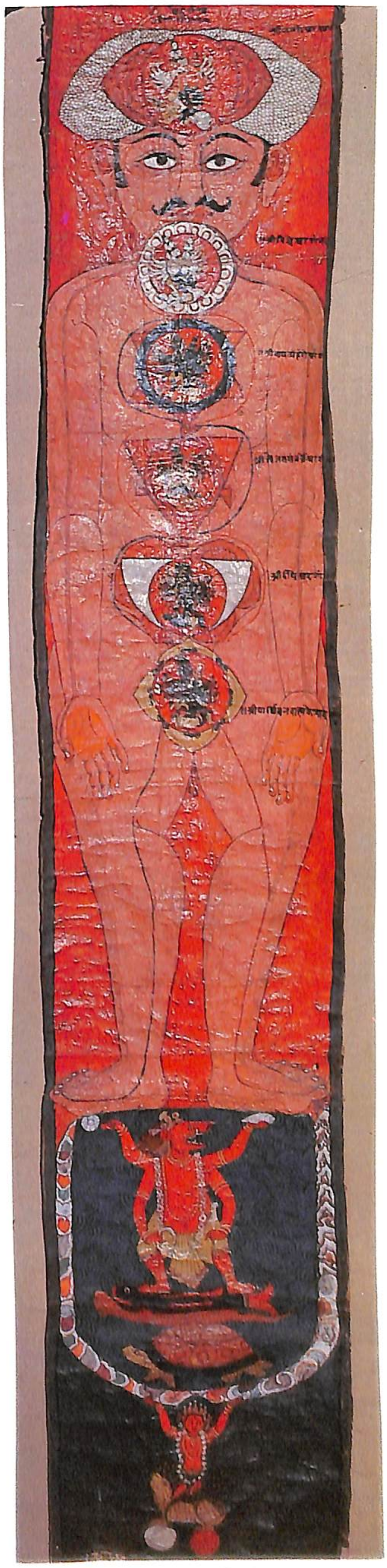
> To the left, she will bring happiness; behind you, she will bring sorrow;
> To the south, she will bring destruction of wealth; if facing you, she will cause death.[17]

The texts are full of complicated computations to determine the exact positioning of *yoginīdaśā.* In general, Maṅgalā is propitious while Saṅkaṭā brings evil, and the texts contain numerous prayers and rites to appease the Yoginīs and to counteract their harmful influences. These Yoginīs are of astrological significance only and have no connection with the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples.

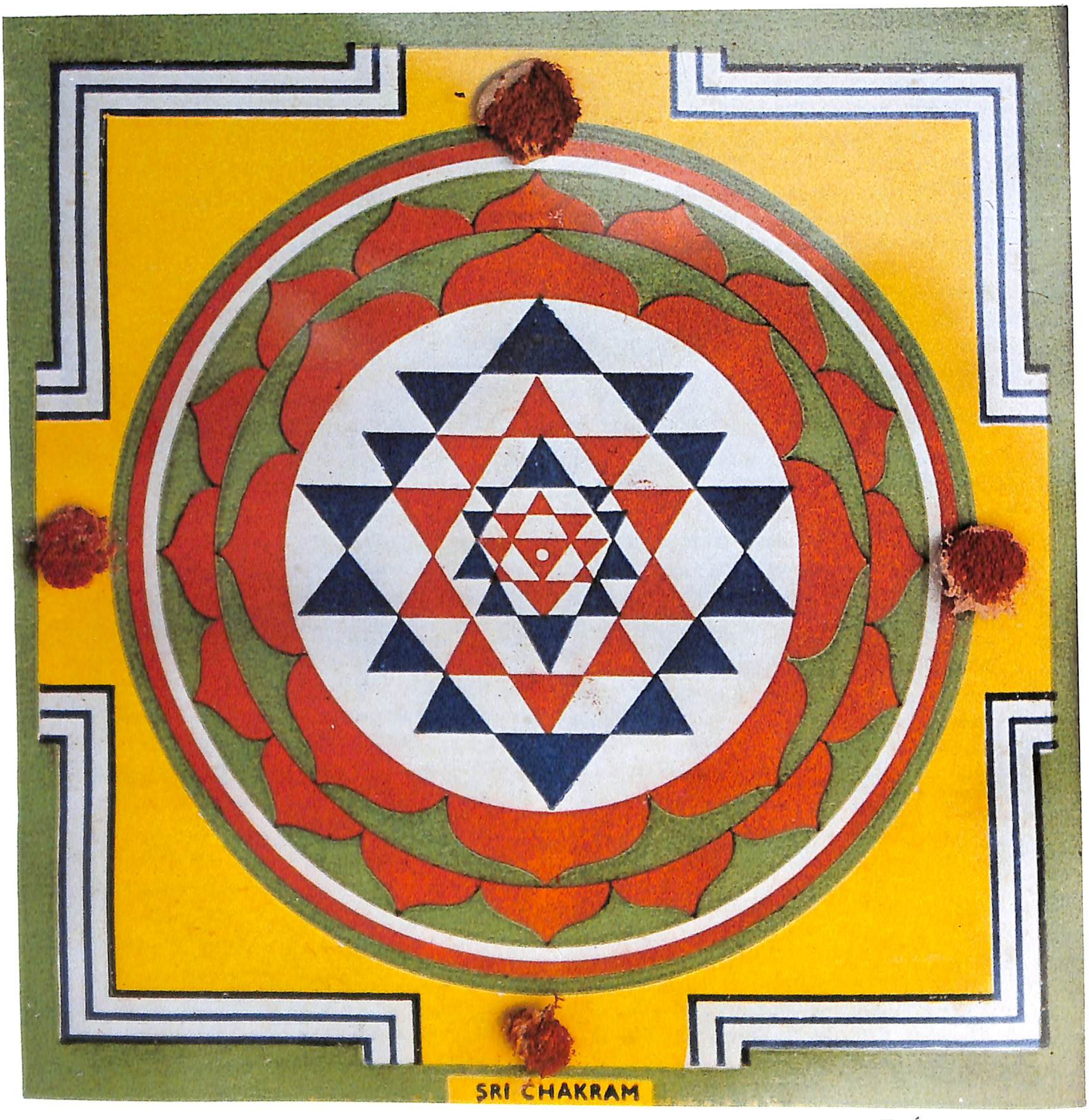
Yoginīs of the Internal Cakras

A special set of seven Yoginīs known by the names Ḍākinī, Rākinī, Lākinī, Kākinī, Sākinī, Hākinī and Yākinī feature prominently in tantra Yoga.[18] Distributing energy throughout the subtle body of all human beings are a series of subtle channels which branch off from the Suṣumṇā, the main channel that runs along the spinal column. Seven cakras conceived as energy centres circle the Suṣumṇā, from the Mūlādhāra Cakra at the base of the spine to the Sahasrāra Cakra at the crown, and each Cakra is presided over by one of the seven Yoginīs named above.

Tantra Yoga visualizes the power within the human body as the Devī Kuṇḍalinī, lying coiled at the base of the spine and normally in dormant condition. The *sādhaka* must awaken Kuṇḍalinī by



The Internal Cakras (Courtesy: Bhaktapur Museum, Nepal)



The Śrī Cakra, modern print

meditating upon her and make her travel upwards through each of the *cakras* until she reaches the Sahasrāra where Śiva resides. At each *cakra* the *sādhaka* experiences a kind of bliss and acquires certain powers such as the conquest of elementary forms of matter. If only one particular *siddhi* (magical power) is desired, the *sādhaka* can stop at that particular *cakra* and meditate upon its presiding Yoginī. If, however, the *sādhaka's* aim is a glimpse of the Ultimate, he must transport Kuṇḍalinī all the way to the Sahasrāra, where uniting with Śiva, she confers the bliss of realisation. It will be apparent that these Yoginīs of the internal *cakras* are deities who stand apart from the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples.

Yoginīs of the Śrī Cakra

The Śrī Cakra, known also as Cakra-rāja or "King of Cakras", is the main instrument of that path known as Śrī Vidyā which constitutes a major and very important facet of Śakti worship. The pattern of the Śrī Cakra symbolizes the manifest universe as also the human body, with Mahātripurasundarī, the Goddess Supreme of the Śrī Cakra, visualized as permeating both universe and human being. It is her immense and pervasive power that is sought to be expressed in the complicated configuration of interlocking lines, triangles and circles that forms the famous Śrī Cakra.

The Śrī Cakra consists of nine Cakras one within the other and each of its nine Cakras is presided over by a set of Yoginīs. The presiding Yoginīs of the outermost enclosure are the eight Prakaṭa (Manifest) Yoginīs who are concerned with qualities like love, anger, greed, intoxication and the like. Sixteen Gupta (Concealed) Yoginīs presiding over the next Cakra are associated with the powers of intellect, memory, hearing and so on. In this manner, and associated with various bodily qualities and functions that one must master and overcome, are sixteen Guptatara (Highly Concealed) Yoginīs, fourteen Sampradāya (Traditional) Yoginīs, ten Kulakaula Yoginīs, ten Nigarbha (Hidden) Yoginīs, eight Rahasya (Secret) Yoginīs and three Parāpararahasya (Exceedingly Secret) Yoginīs.[19] Finally, at the centre, is Devī Tripurasundarī also referred to as Lalitā.

In Śrī Cakra worship the *sādhaka* must enter through the outer portals, meditate on each consecutive configuration, and proceed gradually inwards. Each Śrī Cakra Yoginī, presiding over her respective area, has important powers to offer, such as wealth, fame, health, beauty and control over the functioning of human body and mind as also over the elements of nature. The *sādhaka* desirous of achieving self-realization has to by-pass each set of Yoginīs and push onwards towards the centre. Such a decision implies an arduous course of meditative discipline; for the *bindu* (dot) at the centre signifies that state of super-consciousness which only the very few achieve, and in which the powers given by the Yoginīs cease to have any meaning. It will be apparent that the Śrī Cakra Yoginīs too belong to a category apart from the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples, with whom they are not to be confused.[20]

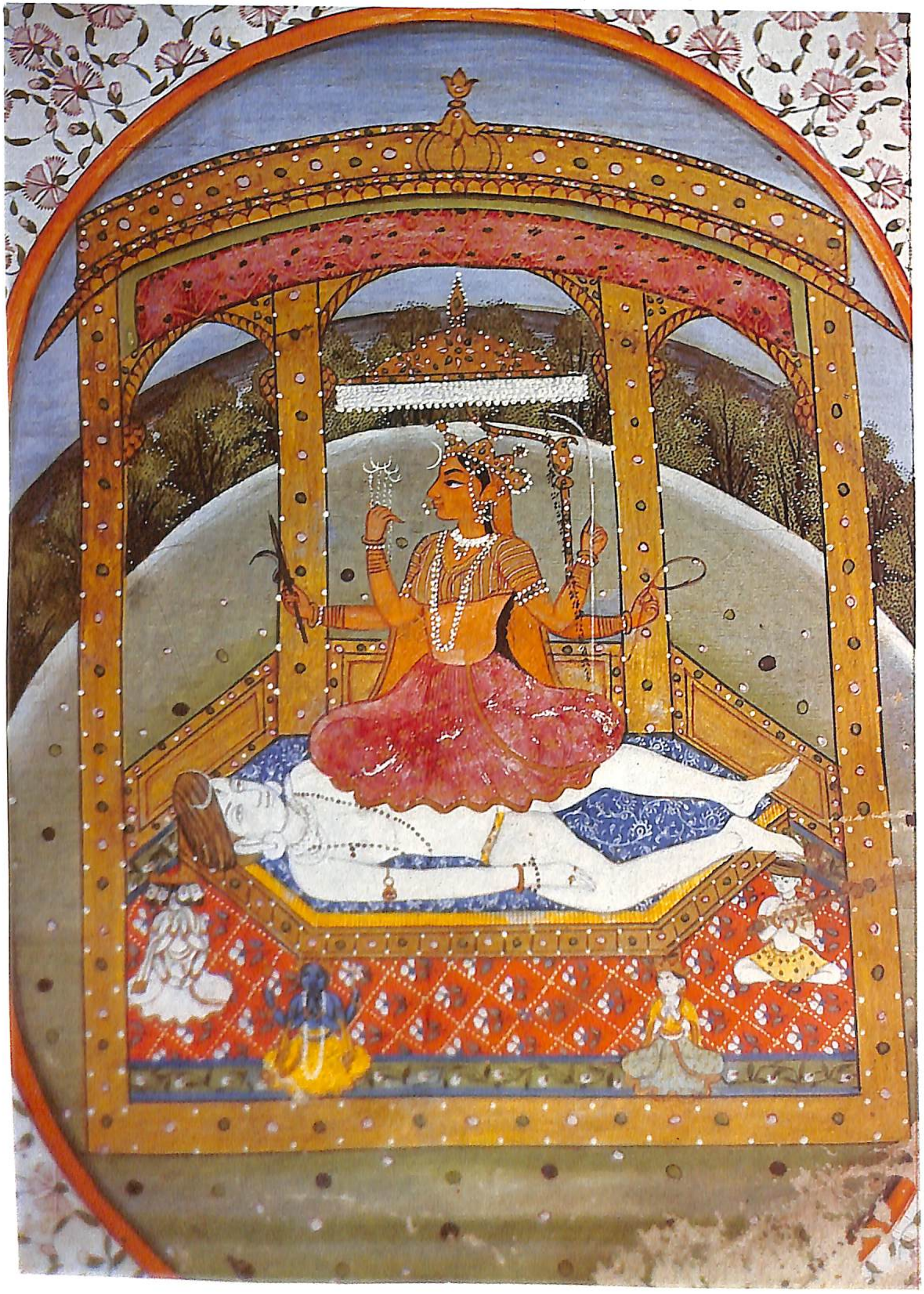
Yoginī as the Great Goddess

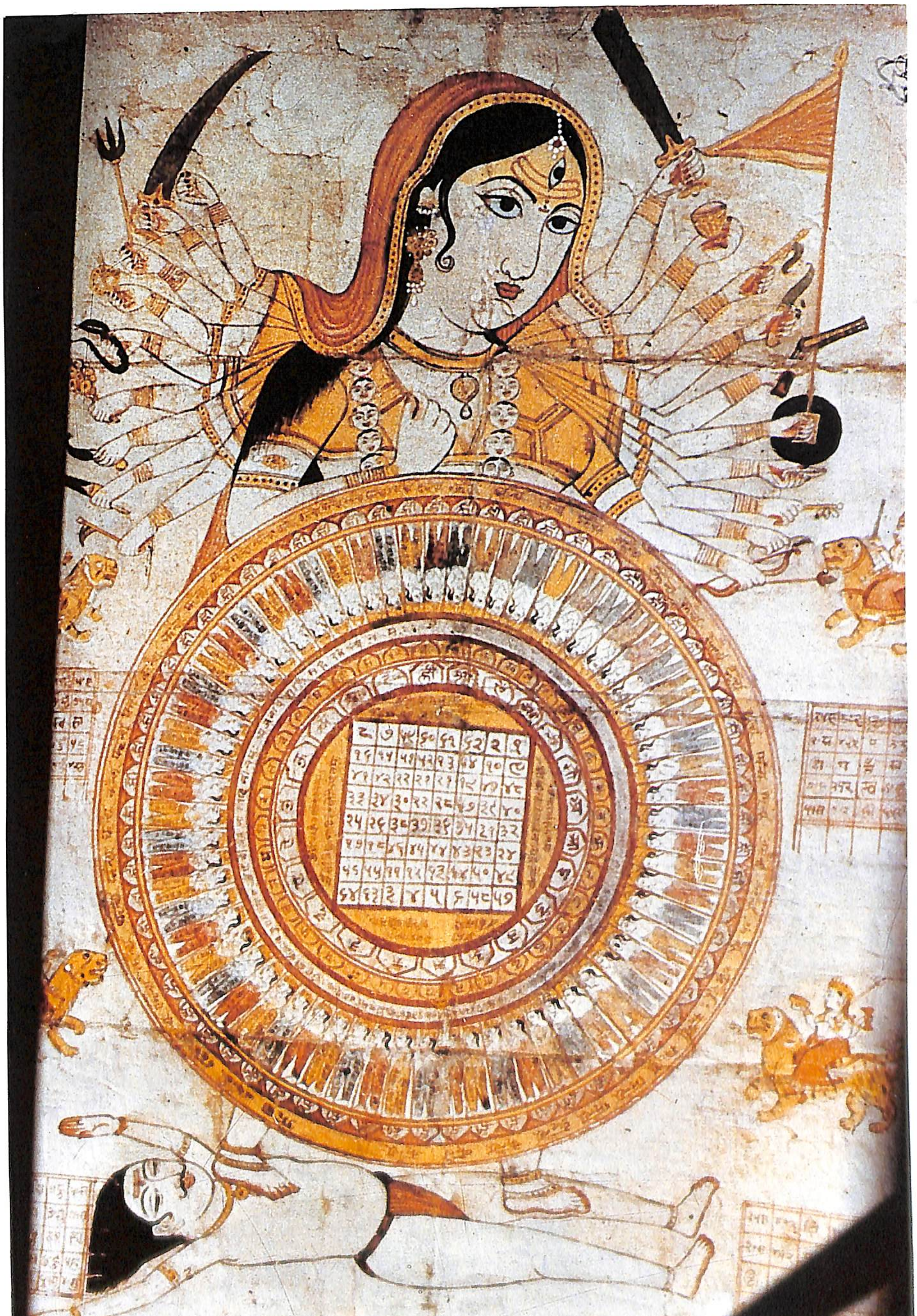
Devī is the appellative of the supreme Goddess of the Śāktas. There was usually no need to give her a specific name: Devī meaning Goddess was sufficient to indicate that infinite, universal, female principle. Personified, she is Ambikā (Mother), Caṇḍikā, Durgā, Pārvatī, Kālikā and a host of other forms. But whatever regional or sectarian names may be used in different texts, that all-pervasive divine force is, in addition, always referred to as Devī.

Devī is occasionally addressed as the Mahā Yoginī or the Great Ascetic, as for instance in the *Lalitā Sahasranāma*,[21] where she is also known as Kula Yoginī.[22] The *Viṣṇu Bhāgavata Purāṇa* also refers to Devī as the Great Yoginī, thus: "O Kātyāyanī, O Mahā Māyā, O Mahā Yoginī, O Devī..."[23] The *Lalitā Sahasranāma* gives Devī the title "She who is worshipped according to the Kaula

Path",[24] and the Kaula *Kulārṇava Tantra* contains more than one allusion to Devī as Yoginī. A *Kulārṇava* verse illustrating this usage of the term Yoginī tells us that those who earnestly perform Kaula rites will achieve all their desires in this world and will finally become one with Yoginī and Vīra,[25] or Devī and Śiva. Relevant in this context is a manuscript entitled *Yoginī Sahasranāma*[26] which is, in fact, the thousand names of Devī herself who is here given the title of Yoginī. Our sixty-four Yoginīs are clearly different from the one Yoginī, the Mahā Yoginī, as the Great Goddess was sometimes titled.

Tripurasundarī, 18th century painting (Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi)





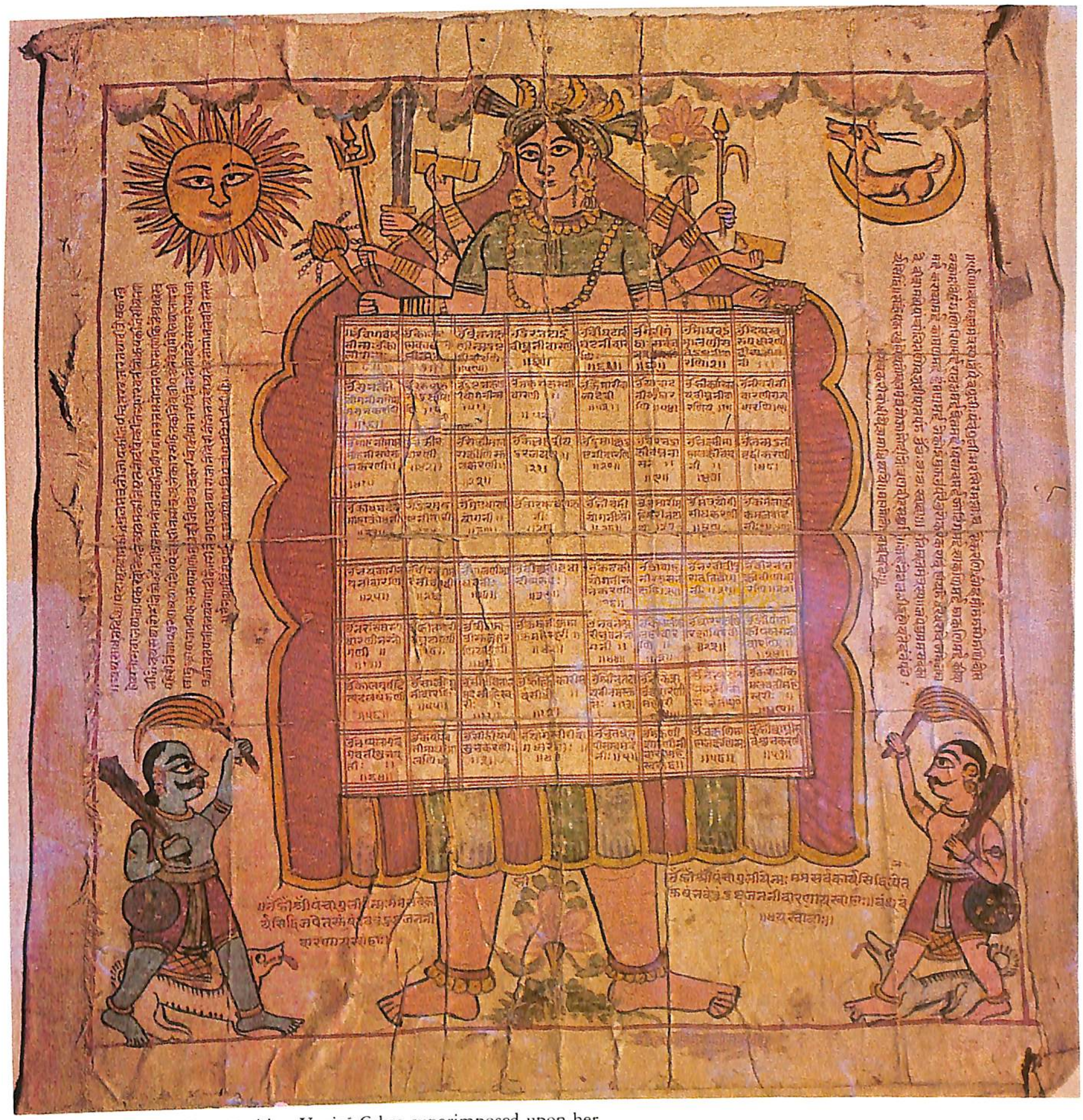
Devī with Yoginī Cakra superimposed upon her. Rajasthan painting on cloth, 18th/19th century (Courtesy: K.C. Aryan, New Delhi

Yoginīs as Aspects of Devī

An analysis of some of the lists of sixty-four Yoginīs contained in Purāṇic texts suggests that in certain traditions, the Yoginīs were regarded as varying aspects of the Great Goddess who, through these Yoginīs, manifested the totality of her presence. The *Skanda Purāṇa* contains one such list of names which illustrates the divine nature of the Yoginīs and includes several well known epithets of the Goddess herself.[27] Names such as Durgā, Gaurī, Kātyāyanī, Śivadūtī, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahāmāyā and Bhrāmarī indicate important aspects of Devī as known from the *Devīmāhātmyam*. Other names, while not specifically mentioned in that important text, are widely accepted as names of the Great Goddess. In this category are included Bhagavatī, Śivā, Śaṅkarapriyā (Beloved of Śaṅkara or Śiva), Tripurā, Bhadrā (Auspicious), Mahābhadrā, Śāntikarī (Bringer of peace), Vedārthajananī (She who gives meaning to the Vedas) and so on. This particular list of the sixty-four Yoginīs appears to belong to a tradition that considered the Yoginīs as aspects of Devī herself. When the *Phetkāriṇī Tantra* tells us that Devī, in her form of Śmaśāna Kālikā, is to be worshipped together with the circle of Yoginīs and followed by Mahākāla or Śiva *(yoginīcakrasahitam mahākālasamnvitam)*,[28] it appears to reflect this elevated aspect of the Yoginīs.

A graphic representation of the idea that the Yoginīs are aspects or parts of the Goddess may be seen in a relatively recent painting on cloth from Rajasthan. With her twenty arms, Devī holds various weapons and stands upon a prostrate male figure. Superimposed against her is a large circle or wheel with sixty-four spokes, each containing the figure of a standing Yoginī. The Yoginīs are numbered from 1 to 64 and each has her name inscribed against her limbs. The idea presented so vividly in this painting is that the sixty-four Yoginīs in some manner emerge from Devī, that they are associated with her and that they represent aspects of her power and glory. The painting probably belongs to the end of the 19th century and it is amusing to note the revolver included as one of Devī's weapons. Another Rajasthan painting conveying a similar idea, portrays an eight by eight square of sixty-four, each square numbered and containing the name of a Yoginī, the entire superimposed upon a standing figure of Devī.

The Orissan *Caṇḍī Purāṇa,* written by Sarala Dasa in the 15th century, reinforces this concept of the Yoginīs. It tells us that the sixty-four Yoginīs were formed from different parts of the body of Devī herself—from her voice, sweat, navel, forehead, cheeks, lips, ears, limbs, toe nails, womb and also from her anger.[29] The *Skanda Purāṇa,* in its *Aruṇācalamāhātmyam* section, also tells us that Devī created the circle of Yoginīs from her own body *(svāngebhyo)*,[30] in this instance to help her fight the great demon Mahiṣāsura. The *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* in its description of Maṇidvīpa or "Jewelled Isle", the home of Devī Bhuvaneśvarī, includes a list of names of the sixty-four aspects of Devī, referred to as sixty-four *kalās*.[31] The word *Kalā* is used here in its common usage of portion, part or aspect and it does not signify the arts. Thus, not only does the divinity of the Yoginīs become well established in these Purāṇic texts, but they are assimilated with the Great Goddess. Such

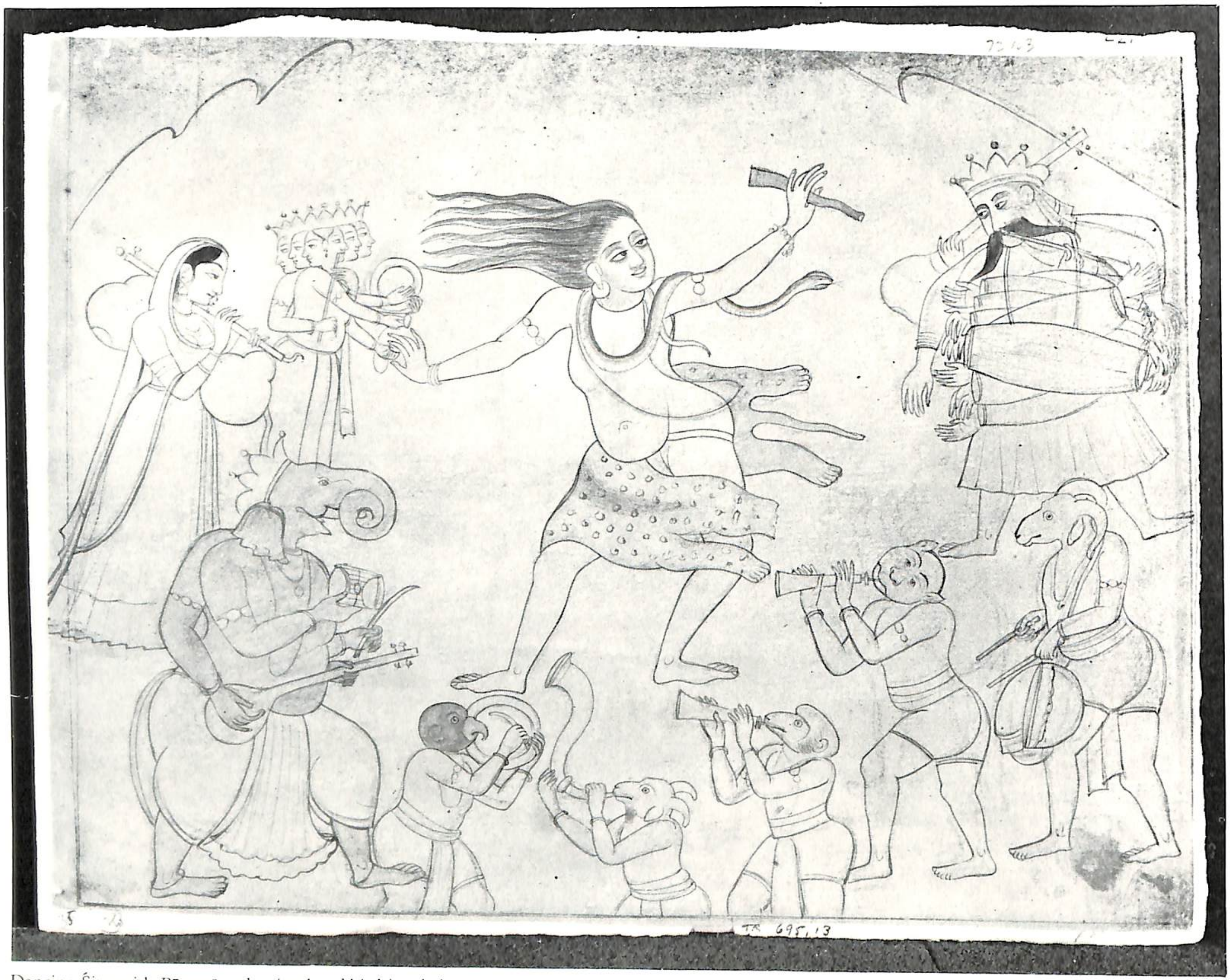


Rajasthani painting of Devī with a Yoginī Cakra superimposed upon her.

assimilation must, however, have occurred at a stage much after the original emergence of the concept of the Yoginīs in the Yoginī temples. It must belong to a phase during which the worship of these goddesses had become so compelling that the orthodox tradition admitted the necessity of incorporating the cult, in some manner, into its own system.

Yoginīs as Attendant Deities of the Great Goddess

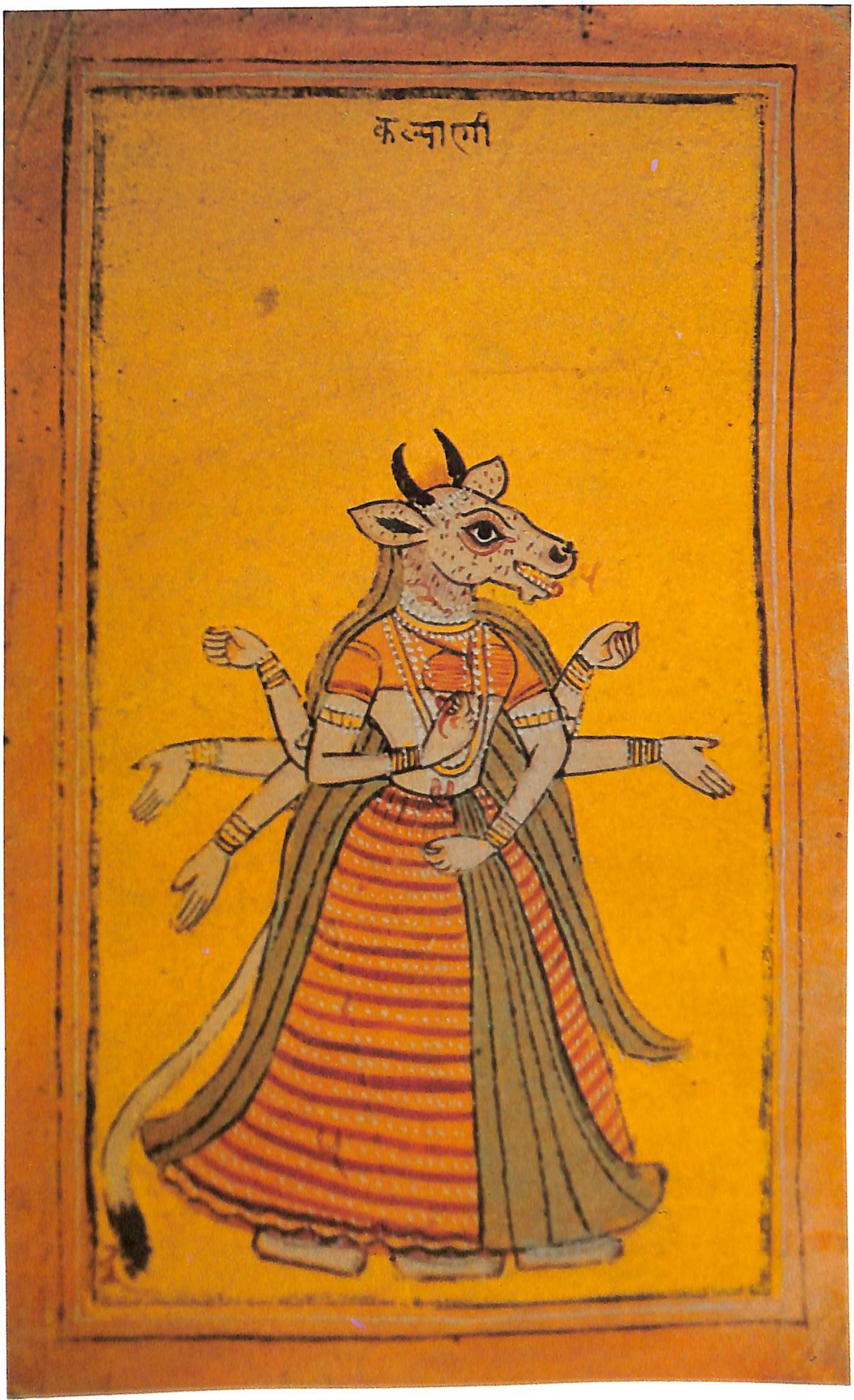
In several other ancient religious texts, the term Yoginī is used to denote minor goddesses who are described either as companions of the Goddess or as deities attendant upon the Goddess. Devī's consort has a host of *gaṇas* as attendants. These *gaṇas* are described in texts[32] and depicted in sculptures with human bodies, but often with the heads of various birds and animals. Through the centuries they continued to have this characteristic, as seen in a drawing



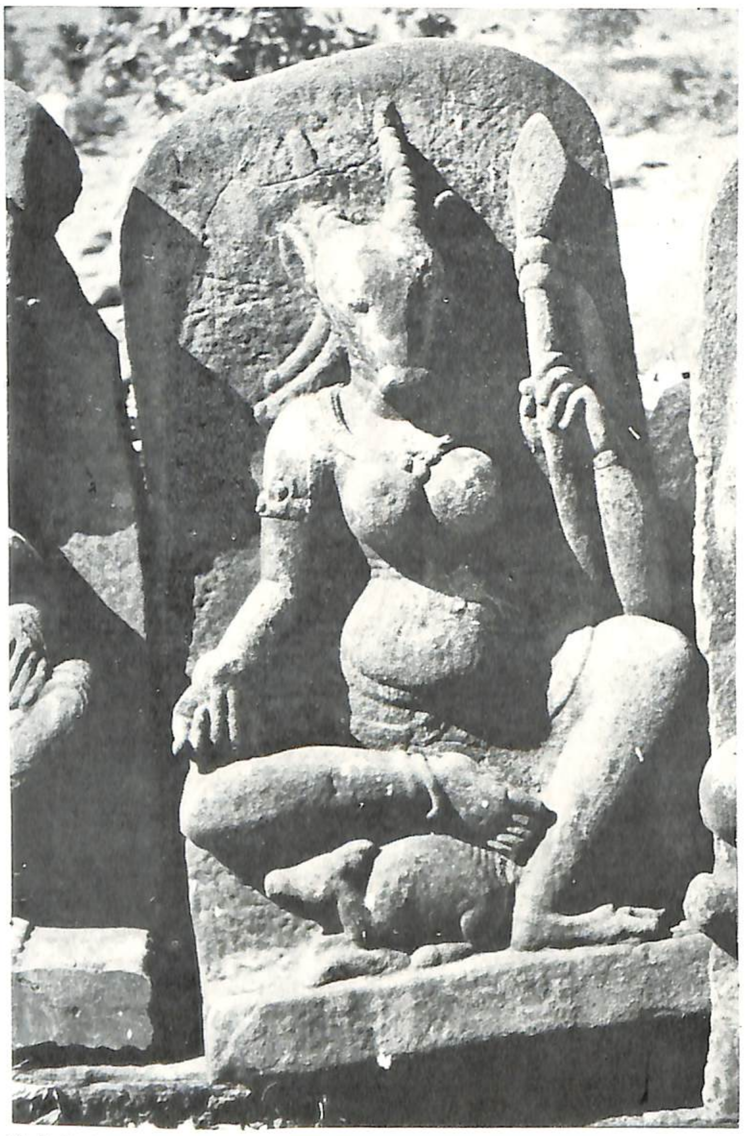
Dancing Śiva with Pārvatī and animal and bird-headed *gaṇas*, 18th century (Courtesy: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

belonging to the end of the 18th century in which dancing Śiva is accompanied by his troupe of animal and bird-headed *gaṇas*. If Śiva had his host of *gaṇas,* it is only natural that Devī should have a group of semi-divine beings as her attendants. And this is the role assigned to the Yoginīs in several texts. The Yoginīs too are frequently depicted in painting and sculpture with bird and animal heads and are described thus in several texts. One such is the *Skanda Purāṇa* which, in its *Kāśī Khaṇḍa,* gives a list of sixty-four Yoginīs, nearly half of whom have bird and animal heads. Another text, the tantric *Kaulajñānanirṇaya,* contains fascinating information on this aspect when, in answer to Devī's question as to how the Yoginīs wander on earth, Śiva lists the forms they assume. Specifically mentioned among birds are the dove, vulture, swan, owl, crane, peacock and cock; and among animals the jackal, goat, ox, cat, tiger, elephant, horse, snake and frog.[33]

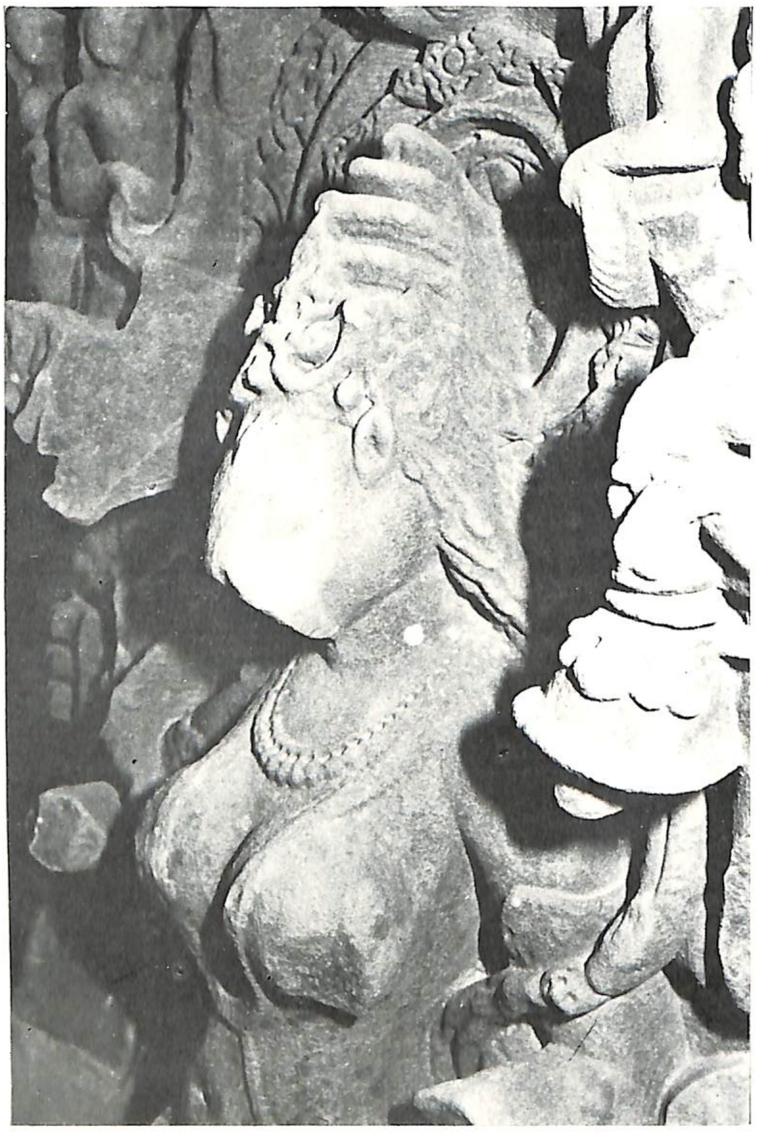
There is little doubt that the idea of *gaṇas* as attendants of Śiva predates that of the Yoginīs as attendants on Devī. The artistic evidence clearly reveals the superior nature of the Yoginīs who are sculpted with several signs indicative of divinity. They have multiple arms and haloes; mounts are assigned to them as is done



Yoginī Kalyāṇī, Rajasthan, 19th century painting



Buffalo-headed Yoginī from Lokhari



Horse-headed Yoginī from Shahdol, Dhubela Museum

only with deities; and flying *vidyādharas* and worshippers surround them. Thus, although companions of the Devī, clearly the Yoginīs enjoy a more elevated status and much greater power than the *gaṇas* of Śiva.

Intriguing information on the Yoginīs as attendants and companions of the Goddess is contained in Somadevasuri's romance *Yaśastilaka*, a work dated in the text itself to the Śaka year 881 or A.D. 939. The text refers to these deities as Mahāyoginīs, perhaps to distinguish them clearly from other categories of Yoginīs such as witches or partners in Kaula rites, and it describes them as waiting upon the dreaded goddess Caṇḍamārī. Their divine status and their great power is clearly established, while the ferocity and terrifying appearance of the Yoginīs is described in graphic if somewhat bizarre terms. The passage composed contemporaneously with some of our Yoginī temples, is fascinating and of sufficient interest to quote in its entirety, particularly since it has not been translated, so far, into English.

> "As abruptly as darkness descends at nightfall, even so, without warning did the Mahāyoginīs appear out of the sky, the earth, the depths of the nether regions and the four corners of space. They traversed the skies at tremendous speed causing their locks of

hair to come undone, and these flowing tresses swept across the sky, hampering and angering other denizens of the aerial regions. In their hands they held staffs topped with skulls and decorated with myriads of little bells which jingled furiously with the speed of their flight and sometimes shattered into hundreds of fragments. Their approach was heralded by this chiming, tinkling, pealing reverberation which caused dancing Nārada to appear on the scene, much to the confusion and embarrassment of the Yoginīs."

"The ornamental designs on their cheeks were painted with blood which was being lapped up by the many snakes adorning their ears. Hovering over the gruesome human skulls decorating their heads were vast numbers of giant vultures who obstructed the rays of the Sun. Sparks issuing from the third eye on their foreheads were fanned into flames by the gaspings of the helpless serpents ruthlessly enmeshed in the tangled masses of their hair; and these flames leapt forth so high as to singe the banners of the Sun's aerial chariot. The faces of these Yoginīs were truly terrible to behold as they frowned with arrogance, uttering a tremendous and terrifying *phetkāra* sound."

"Tired by their great journey across the sky, the Mahāyoginīs stretched out their great tongues to drink the waters of the celestial Ganges and by this action angered the seven great sages (the stars of the Great Bear). Between the edges of the long teeth protruding from their mouths, the Yoginīs held the clouds, thus marring somewhat the beauty of the sky. The companions of the gods were alarmed by the vibrating resonance of their anklet bells as the Yoginīs swiftly covered the distance between the sky and the earth. Their dark loose tresses splaying out across the sky, darkened it, and their terrible yet glowing skull crowns stood out among the black tresses like stars in the night sky. Dust as the night of destruction will appear intolerable and long to the world, so these Mahāyoginīs appeared intolerably ferocious and long-limbed, as they occupied the space within the temple of their Great Goddess, Caṇḍamārī.[34]"

Somadevasuri, *Yaśastilaka,* A.D. 959

"She who is served by 64 crores of groups of Yoginīs" is one of the thousand titles of the Goddess in the *Lalitā Sahasranāma*.[35] The *Kālī Tantra* describes Kālī or Śyāmā as attended upon by a thousand Yoginīs,[36] while the *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa* describes the Yoginīs as servants and functionaries of the Goddess.[37] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* mentions twelve Yoginīs as the close companions *(śakhī)* of Devī.[38] At some stage the number of Yoginīs became conventionalised to sixty-four, although their names, descriptions and attributes do not appear to have been standardized. This concept of the Yoginīs as deities attendant upon Devī also appears to have arisen as a means of incorporation of these goddesses into the orthodox fold.

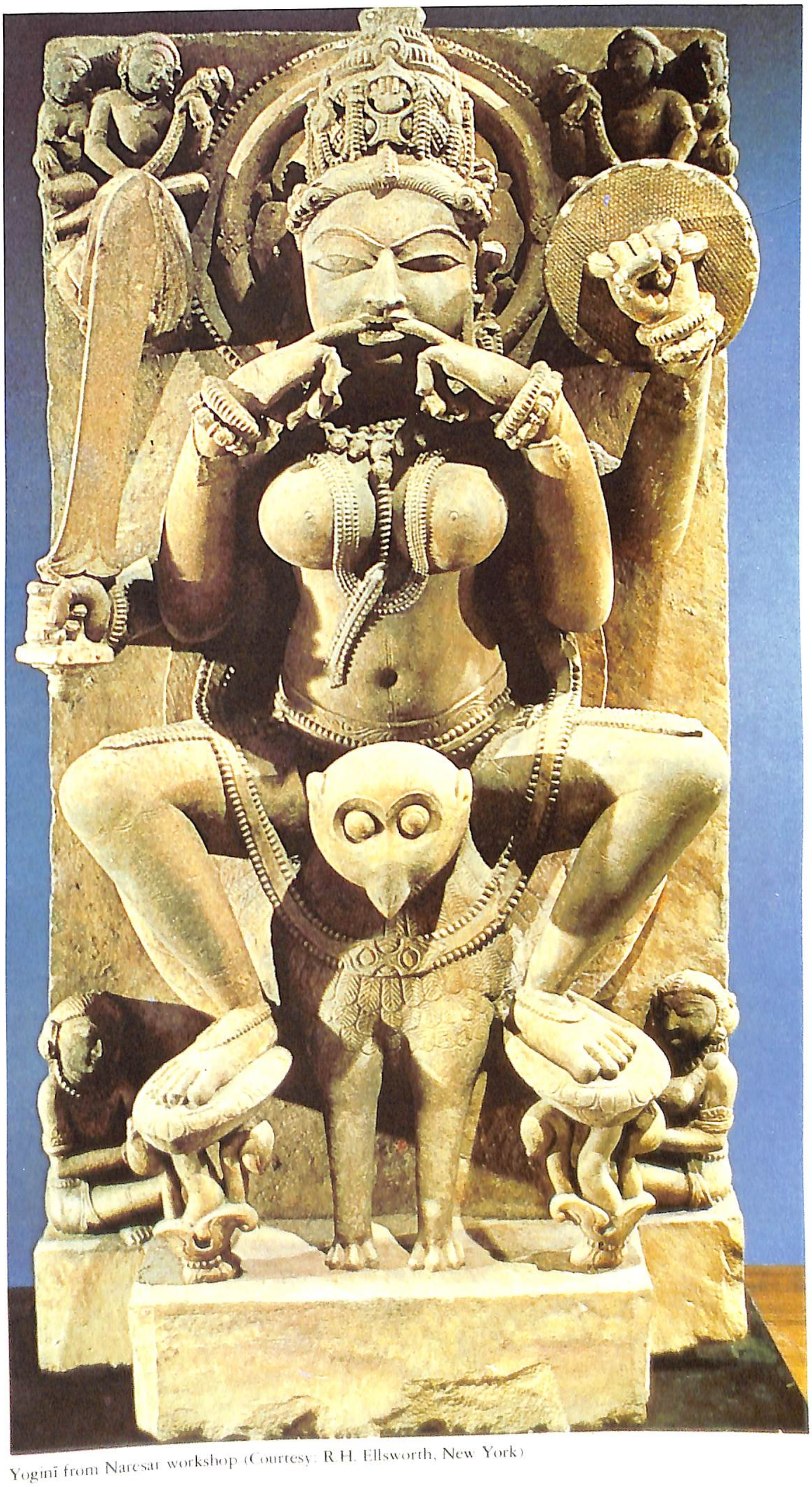
Yoginīs as Acolytes of the Great Goddess: the Mātṛkās

An important tradition derives the sixty-four Yoginīs in groups of eight from the Aṣṭa Mātṛkās or Eight Mothers. From very early times we know that the Sapta Mātṛkās or Seven Mothers, as an independent group of goddesses later expanded to eight, nine or sixteen, were popularly worshipped all over India. The familiar *Devīmāhātmyam* story of the origin of the Mothers tells of how seven of the gods sent their female energies *(śaktis)* who had the same attributes and powers as themselves and were their female counterparts, to help Devī in her great battle against the demons. These goddesses, Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī and Nārasiṁhī, were highly effective in helping Devī Caṇḍikā destroy the demon armies. When the demon Śumbha taunted Devī and scoffed at her for fighting with the strength of others, Caṇḍikā absorbed these goddesses into her own body and then killed the demon. Shrines dedicated to the Mothers are to be found in every part of India and their cult was particularly popular in Orissa where many of the Mātṛkā images are over life-size in dimension.

The tradition deriving the sixty-four Yoginīs from the eight Mātṛkās is contained in the 146th chapter of the *Agni Purāṇa.* The eight Mothers are Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā and Mahālakṣmī. The sixty-four Yoginīs are derived from the eight Mātṛkās in groups of eight (once of none and once of seven). Each group of Yoginīs is described as belonging to the family *(kula)* of one or other of the Mothers or as being born (*sambhava*) from a Mother. Since the Mātṛkās themselves are considered to be emanations of Devī and aspects of the Divine Female, the Yoginīs emerging from them must also, by association, be considered divine or semi-divine and as acolytes of the Great Goddess. Such a concept too seems to have arisen with the assimilation of the Yoginīs into the orthodox fold.

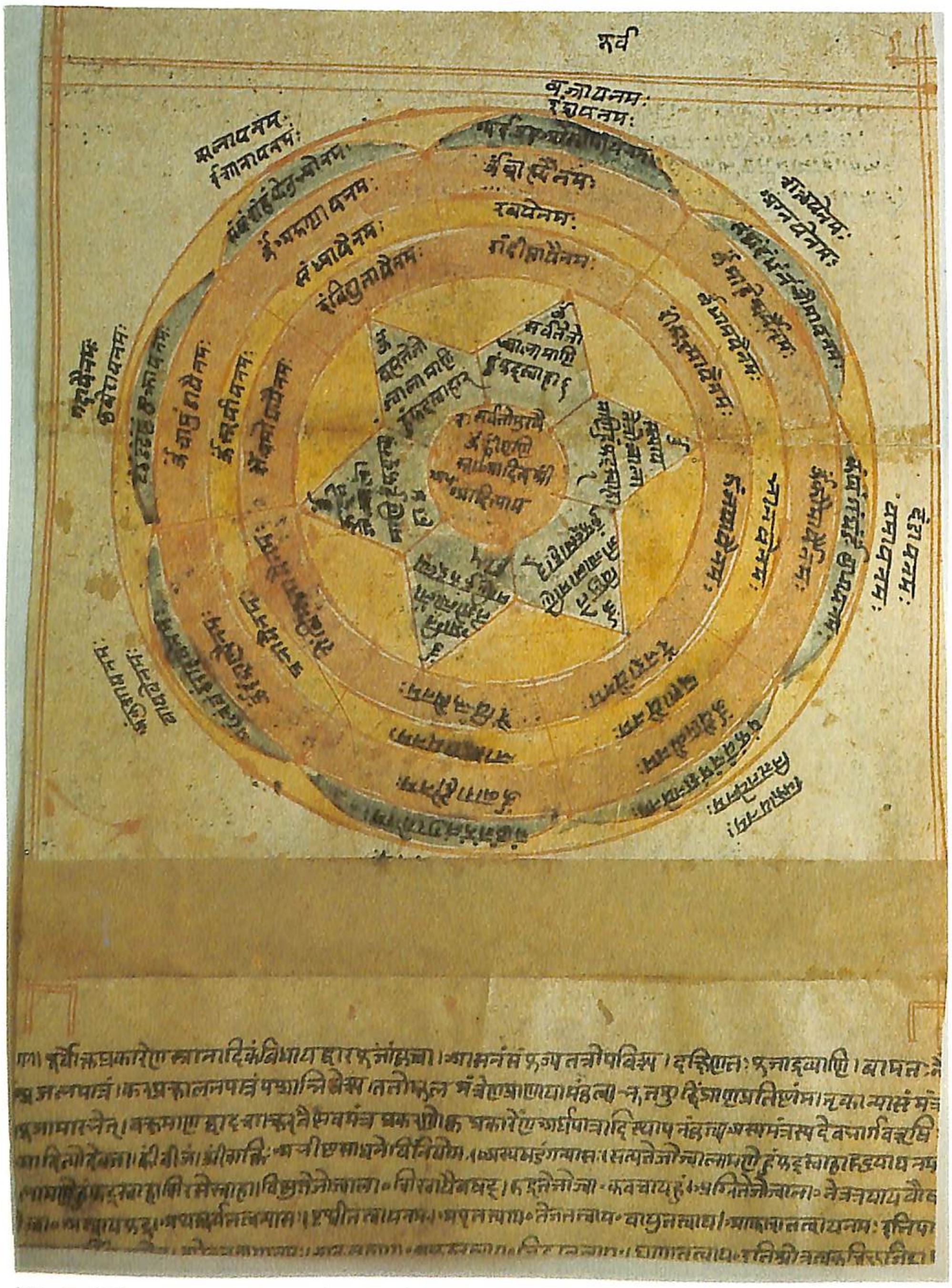
The derivation of sixty-four Yoginīs from the eight Mātṛkās became an accepted tradition as may be seen from the commentaries on several texts including also Bhaskararaya's commentary to the *Lalitā Sahasranāma.*[39] The *Kathāsaritsāgara,* which we considered earlier when examining the aspect of Yoginī as sorceress, contains two stories which seem to indicate that by the middle of the 11th century (the date of the work), the connection between the Yoginīs and Mātṛkās had become part of the common lore. The first story related by Candrasvāmin is an intriguing one. In the middle of the night he saw a circle of Mothers *(mạtṛcakra)* headed by Nārāyaṇī (an alternate name for Vaiṣṇavī). The Mātṛkās had with them a variety of gifts to present to Bhairava for whom they were impatiently waiting. Bhairava, Lord of the circle of Mothers, arrived just as Nārāyaṇī finished explaining the reason for his delay. The Mātṛkās presented their gifts to him, after which he danced and sported with the Yoginīs *(tāṇḍavena kṣaṇam nṛtyannakrīḍadyoginīsakhaḥ).*[40] It would appear that the circle of Mothers, the *mātṛcakra,* included also the Yoginīs, or that the word Yoginī is used here as a synonym for Mātṛkā.

The second story suggests a connection between the Yoginīs and Mātṛkās, but also reflects a slight confusion between the concept of Yoginī as goddess and Yoginī as sorceress. The tale told by Kandarpa contains an incident in which a collection of Yoginīs apparently emerged from a group of Mothers.[41] It was late at night and circles of flying beings *(khecarīcakra)* had begun to move about in the sky. Kandarpa, lost and miles from home, found a deserted



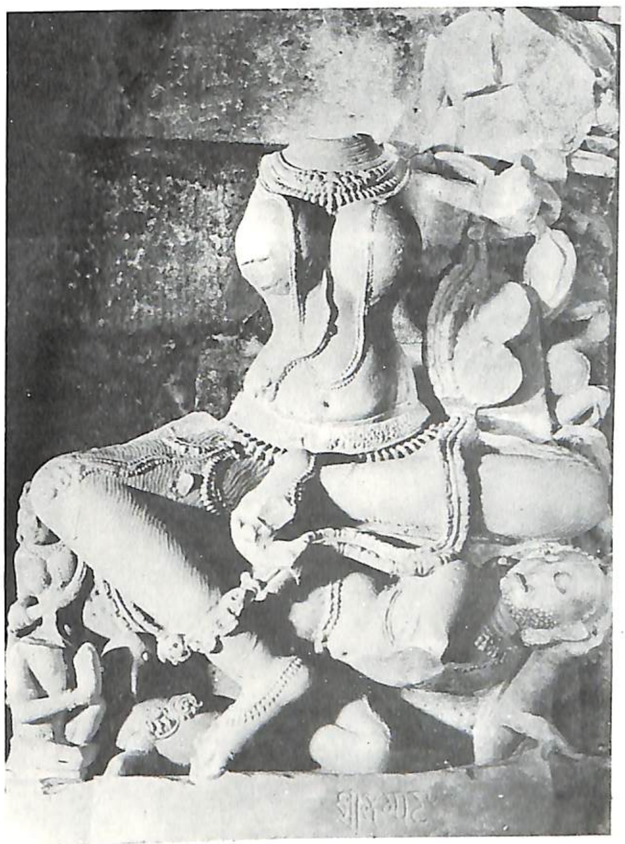
Yoginī from Naresar workshop (Courtesy: R.H. Ellsworth, New York) temple of the Mothers *(mātṛdevagṛham śūnyam),* entered it, saw the brightness and power of the Mātṛkās and prayed to them for protection. A little later, Kandarpa saw a collection of Yoginīs emerging from within the group of Mātṛkās. The phrase used *(mātṛgaṇantarāt nirgatya yoginīgrāmaḥ)* indicates that the Yoginīs emerged from the Mothers, and not from within the temple of the Mothers, thus apparently indicating the divine status of the Yoginīs. The rest of the story seems, however, to suggest the human witch-like aspect of the Yoginīs. Kandarpa hears them talking to one another:

> "Tonight we must go to the general assembly of the Yoginīs *(yoginīcakramelakam)* in Chakrapura, and how can this Brahman be kept safe in this place which is full of wild beasts? So let us take him to some place where he will be happy; and afterwards we will bring him back again...When they had said this they adorned me, and carrying me through the air, placed me in the house of a rich Brahman in a certain city and went away...



Mātṛkā Cakra on paper, Rajasthan, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)

> Then those yoginīs came back from their assembly in this last watch of the night and by their supernatural power carried me off, and flew up into the air with me. And while they were flying through the air, they had a fight with another set of Yoginis, who came, wishing to carry me off, and they let me go and I fell down here."



Yoginī from the Bheraghat temple

This second part of Kandarpa's story certainly leaves one with the impression of an assembly of covens of witches, rather than of groups of goddesses.

Stray references in various texts suggests that the words Yoginī and Mātṛkā were occasionally used as synonyms. One such example is contained in the *Aruṇācalamāhātmyam* section of the *Skanda Purāṇa* which refers to "Mothers of the circle of Yoginīs" *(yoginīcakramātaro)*.[42] A similar usage of these words seems to occur in the 52nd chapter of the *Agni Purāṇa* which consists of a total of sixteen lines devoted to listing the names of the Yoginīs, after which follows the statement that Bhairava, referred to as Lord of the Mothers *(mātṛnātha)* is to be worshipped at the centre of the Mothers *(mātṛmadhye pūjyaḥ)*.[43] Since the chapter is devoted to the sixty-four Yoginīs, it seems probable that the word Mātṛkā is used here as an alternative for Yoginī. Another description of Bhairava, repeated in more than one Kaula tantra, also suggests the synonymous use of the terms Yoginī and Mātṛkā. Bhairava is pictured at the centre of the circle of Yoginīs, surrounded by the *maṇḍala* of Mothers *(yoginīcakramadhyastham mātṛmaṇḍalaveṣṭhitam)*.[44] The *maṇḍala* of Mātṛkās seems to be an alternative phrase for the Cakra of Yoginīs, the repetition being perhaps for emphasis.

Yoginīs as Patron Goddesses of the Kaulas

Having examined the term Yoginī in its several contexts, and considered the many aspects of the Yoginīs in their differing connotations as revealed from a variety of texts, both religious and literary, we arrive ultimately at the Yoginīs of our Yoginī temples. It appears that these goddesses, generally visualized as a group of sixty-four, were regarded as patron deities by those who followed the heterodox path known as Kaula *mārga*.

As we mentioned in the Preface, texts that refer to the highly esoteric cult of the Yoginīs rarely contain definitive statements on the cult, nor are they explicit regarding the position held by these goddesses within the cultus. Yoginī *nāmāvalīs* (name-lists) stand in isolation, neither preceded nor followed by any explanatory verses on the worship or status of these deities. Tantras that speak of Yoginīs reiterate repeatedly that this is highly secret, hidden knowledge *(rahasyātirahasyānām rahasyo-ayam)*[45] that was to be divulged only to initiates. A scrutiny of a series of tantric texts reveals a number of passing references to the Yoginīs, some of which are quite abstruse, but which when put together, discloses a fundamental connection between the Yoginī cult and the tantric sect known as the Kaulas. The evidence is largely circumstantial but no less convincing.

A consideration of several Kaula texts and of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* in particular,[46] indicates that the Yoginīs are the special deities of followers of the Kaula path. The *Kulārṇava,* one of the better-known tantras of the Kaula school, tells us on more than one occasion that those following the Kaula path are the favourites of the Yoginīs, while those opposed to it will incur their curse. Even those who deride the Kaulikas will be cursed by the Yoginīs, who seem to have been regarded by the Kaulas as their patron goddesses.

> Those foolish persons who censure the followers of the Kaula path, them the Yoginīs will destroy; of that there is no doubt.[47]

Other Kaula texts containing similar references include the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* which tells us that followers of the Kaula path become specially dear to the Yoginīs,[48] and the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* which states that the blessings of the Yoginīs fall on followers, and their curses on the enemies of the Kaula Cakra.[49]

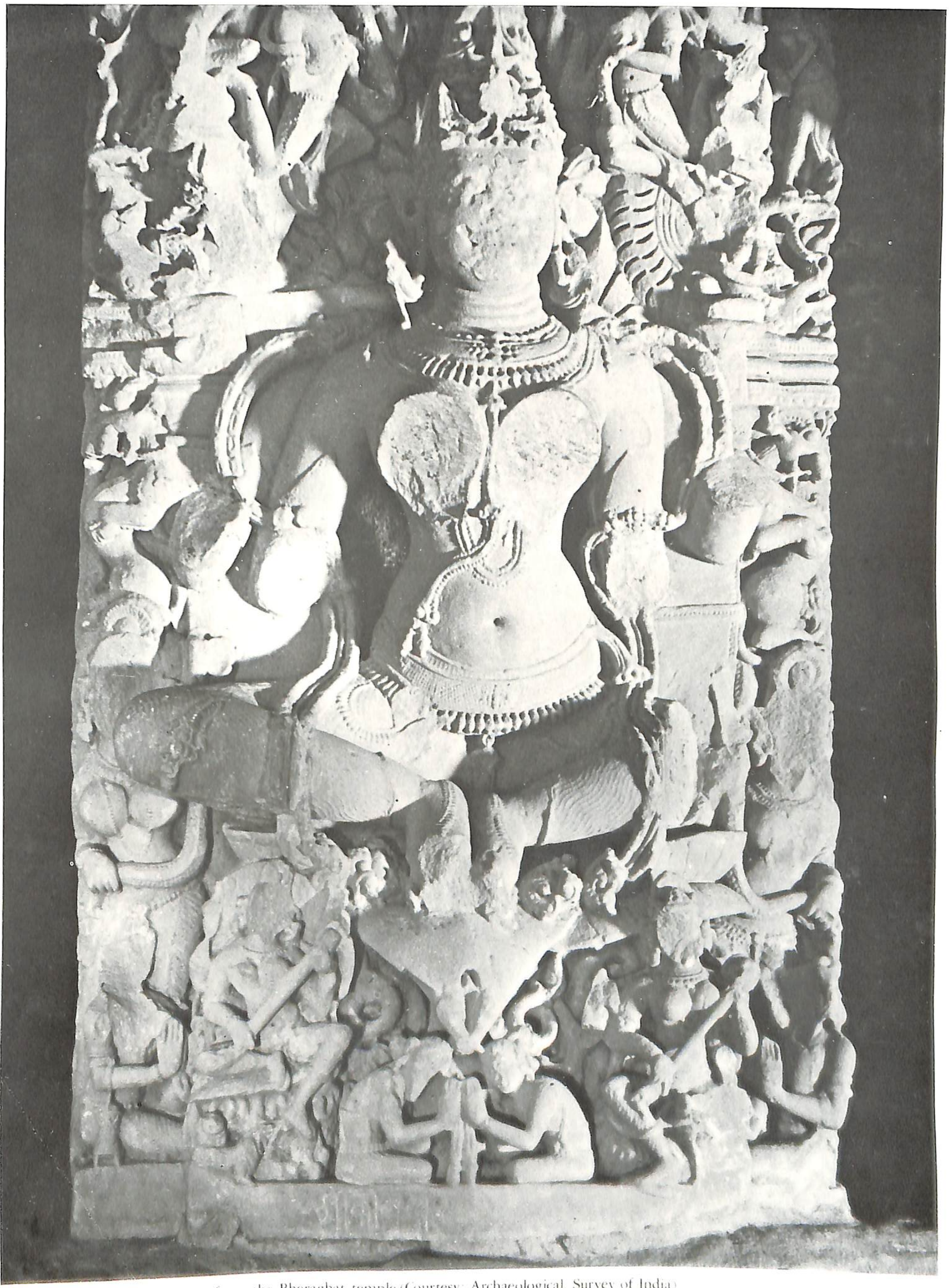
One of the nine images on the exterior of the Hirapur temple, Orissa

The earlier discussion on *Cakra pūjā* has already introduced us to the ritual practices of the Kaula school, referred to popularly as the five "m"s, commencing with offerings of fish, meat, grain and wine and climaxing with ritual sexual union. Kaula doctrine states that through such *bhoga* (enjoyment) as opposed to *yoga* (renunciation), its followers will achieve a state of bliss that is termed Kula. Kula is defined as a state in which the mind and sight are united, the sense organs lose their individuality and sight merges into the object to be visualized.[50] Akula is defined in the same manner and it is further stated that Kula is Śakti and Akula is Śiva, and that ultimate bliss arises from the union of the two. In the Kaula ritual circle, each *sādhaka* was to think of himself as Śiva and of his partner as Devī, and in this manner try to anticipate the bliss of Kula.

The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya,* an important early Kaula text, speaks of the various Kaula schools in existence, and tells us that its doctrine is that of the school founded by Matsyendranātha and known as Yoginī Kaula.[51] Each chapter of this tantric text commences by stating that it is expounding the Yoginī Kaula doctrine. The *Śrī Matottara Tantra,* a Kaula text which refers to *Kaulajñāna* (Kaula knowledge), the *Kulaputra* (Kaula *sādhaka)* and *kulaśāpa* (Kaula curse) and deals extensively with Yoginīs, ends each chapter with the statement that it is expounding the secret knowledge of the Yoginīs *(yoginīguhye)*.[52] The later copy of the *Matottara* known as the *Gorakṣa Saṁhitā,* ends its chapters stating that it is expounding the secret Yoginī doctrine of the *Matottara* that belongs to the Kaula tradition *(kulakaulinīmata)*.[53] The *Kulārṇava Tantra,* in its concluding verses, seems to refer to itself as a treatise on the Yoginīs *(kulārṇavam idam śāstram yoginīnām hṛdi sthitam)*.[54] It appears probable that the Yoginī cult, as seen in the Yoginī temples and as it first emerged, is a branch of the Kaula school, referred to originally as Yoginī Kaula.

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* uses the term Yoginī in three different contexts, to refer to Devī herself (a usage already examined), to describe the female partners in the Cakra ritual previously considered, and to describe the goddesses who are the patron deities of the Kaulikas. Our interest here is in this third important aspect

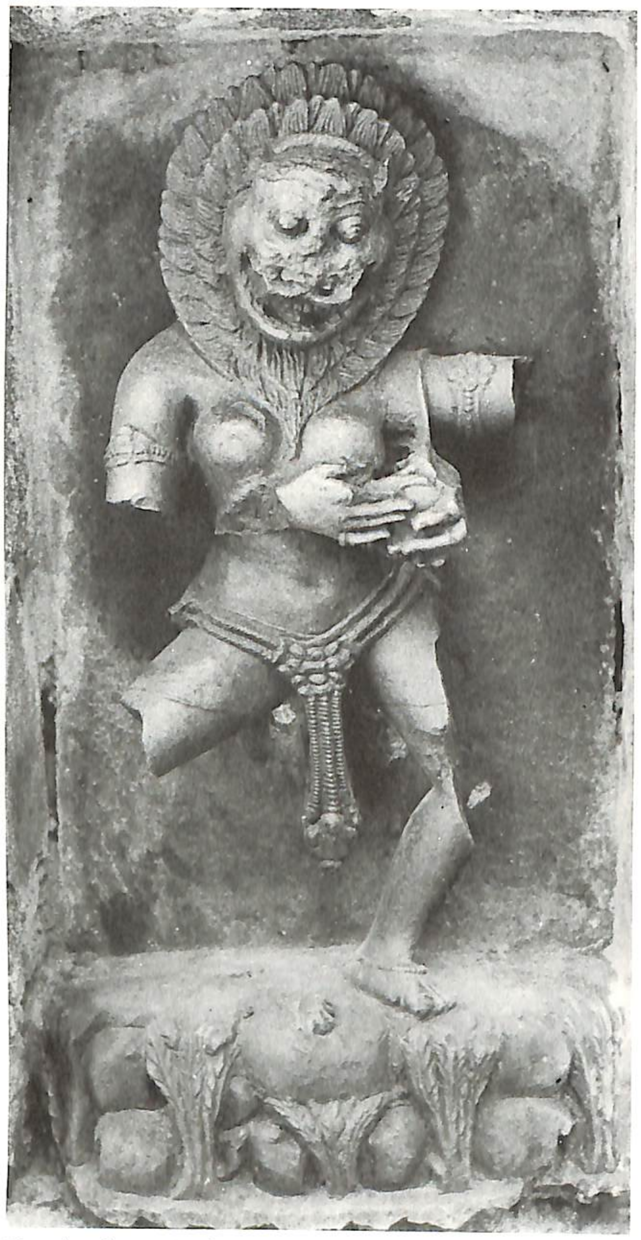
ANGIRAS ARYA'S
आङ्गिरसार्यस्य पुस्तकम्



Yoginī Kāmadā (giver of love) from the Bheraghat temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India) of the Yoginīs. These patron goddesses hold a subsidiary position compared to Devī, but in one passage the *Kulārṇava* elevates them to a decidedly high status, assigning them a function of cosmic significance.

> To those eternal Yoginīs by whose glory
> The three worlds have been established,
> To them I bow down, to them I pray.[55]

The *Matottara Tantra* too contains one description of the Yoginīs as capable of creating and destroying the world.[56] Generally, however, the Yoginīs are invoked only in connection with the rites of Kula *dharma*. The *Kulārṇava* states that those who make distinctions of caste in the Kula Cakra become food for the Yoginīs,[57] and that those who have the capacity for such Cakra worship and yet do not peform this ritual, will be destroyed by the yoginīs.[58] It specifies that those who regard as gods the inebriated *sādhakas* of such a Cakra, will attain the world of the Yoginīs.[59] It warns the *sādhaka* that if he insults a woman, the Yoginīs will be angry;[60] he may not strike a woman even with a flower, and no matter what fault she may have, he must ignore it and speak only of her virtues. *The Kaulajñānanirṇaya* too contains a similar warning against ever being angry with women,[61] who in Kaula tradition, were clearly placed on a pedestal.



Lion-faced Yoginī from Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* speaks of the Yoginīs whose home is in the sky and it tells us that when they wander the earth, they assume the forms of the various earthly creatures, animal, bird and human.[62] The *Kulārṇava* refers to crores of Yoginīs and Bhairavas who live in the sky, on earth, in water, on the mountains and in the forests, and it tells us that they are specially invoked by the *sādhaka* to protect the kaulikas.[63] Another passage describes them thus:

> Whether fierce or gentle, terrible to behold, all-powerful,
> Residing in the sky, on earth or in the vastness of space, May those Yoginīs always be well-disposed towards me.[64]

The *Kulārṇava* rarely mentions any specific number for the Yoginīs, but its tenth chapter contains one clear allusion to the sixty-four Yoginīs,[65] and one verse referring to the worship of the eight Kulas and the sixty-four (presumably Yoginīs).[66] The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* contains one reference to the Yoginīs as being sixty-four in number,[67] while the *Matottara* gives details of two circles of sixty-four Yoginīs and one circle of eighty-one Yoginīs.[68] The *Kulārṇava* speaks of *aṣṭāṣṭaka pūjā* or the worship of eight groups of eight, which may be spread out over sixty-four days or may be performed in the course of s single day.[69] It seems clear that the term *aṣṭāṣṭaka* (eight groups of eight) issued here to refer to the sixty-four Yoginīs. Convincing evidence of this usage of the term is contained in two chapters of the *Agni Purāṇa*. Chapter 146, consisting of a total of twenty verses that described the sixty-four Yoginīs and derives them from the eight Mātṛkās, is entitled *Aṣṭāṣṭakadevyaḥ*, or the eight times eight deities. Chapter 52 of the same Purāṇa commences with a reference to *yoginyaṣṭāṣṭakam* and then proceeds to list the names of the sixty-four Yoginīs.[70] A passage in the *Kulārṇava* too refers to the *aṣṭāṣṭaka* group of Yoginīs (*aṣṭāṣṭakayoginīgaṇam*) or to the eight circles of Yoginīs (cakrāṣṭakayoginīsam),[71] thus suggesting the number sixty-four, while there is more than one mention of circles of Yoginīs (yoginīvṛndaṁ).[72]

Kaula tantras make it clear that Śiva as Bhairava was the leader of this group of goddesses. The *Kulārṇava* and *Meru Tantra* use identical words in visualising Śiva "at the centre of the circle of Yoginīs and surrounded by the Maṇḍala of Mothers"[73], a description already considered in the context of the synonymous usage of the terms Yoginī and Mātṛkā. The *Matottara Tantra* describes Śiva at the centre of the group of Yoginīs *(yoginīgaṇamadhyagam),*[74] while other texts speaking of Śiva's presence in the midst of the Yoginīs include the *Śrīvidyāpīṭhamatsaraḥ,*[75] the *Guhyasiddhikrama*[76] and the *Vārāhī Tantra.*[77]

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* warns those worshipping the Śrī Cakra to remember the Yoginīs and Bhairavas, as those foolish enough not to do so will be treated as an animal by the Yoginīs.[78] The cult of Śrī Vidyā and its worship through the Śrī Cakra is today not generally associated with the Kaula way of worship, being pursued largely by the *dakṣiṇa mārgīs* who believe in inner, symbolic worship rather than the external Kaula practices. However, the texts tell us that Śrī Cakra worship may be pursued by either method and it was apparently quite popular at one time with the Kaulas. An important Kaula text of the Śrī Cakra is the *Yoginīhṛdaya,* which comprises the last three chapters of the *Nityāṣodaśikārṇava,* which in turn forms part of the *Vāmakeśvara Tantra.* The *Nityāṣodaśikārṇava* speaks of the glory of the sixty-four crores of Yoginīs and of their installation in a circle.[79] The *Yoginīhṛdaya* speaks of Kaula rites and Cakra pūjā, then mentions the sixty-four crores of powerful Yoginīs, proceeding to refer to them as *aṣṭāṣṭaka* and to speak of their establishment in a Cakra.[80] The early commentary on this text, known as *Yoginīhṛdayadīpikā,* refers here to the Akṣobhyā group of sixty-four Yoginīs, a well-known grouping of Yoginīs listed in the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Matottara Tantra* among other texts (See Appendix II). The *Jñānārṇava Tantra,* another Kaula Śrī Cakra text, also refers to the worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs and to the installation of the sixty-four crores of Yoginīs in a Cakra.[81] It states further that those who obtain knowledge of the Śrī Cakra by illegitimate means will become food for the Yoginīs.[82] As we have earlier pointed out, the various configurations of the Śrī Cakra are visualized as presided over by Yoginīs, who belong, however, to a different category to the Yoginīs we are here considering as the patron deities of the Kaulas.

It appears then, from a consideration of important Kaula texts that the Yoginīs formed a group of goddesses closely connected with the Kaula cult, and more specially with that branch of the Kaula path known as Yoginī Kaula. Visualized generally as sixty-four in number, the Yoginīs were divided into eight *kulas* or groupings of eight, and pictured as forming a circle around Śiva as Bhairava. They were invoked by Kaula *sādhakas* to protect followers of the Kaula path, and worshipped in order to gain a variety of magical abilities to be considered later. Temples of the Yoginīs must have been constructed by such Kaula believers.

Hirapur Yoginī (Courtesy: Archaeological Sruvey of India)

Yoginīs and Yakṣiṇīs

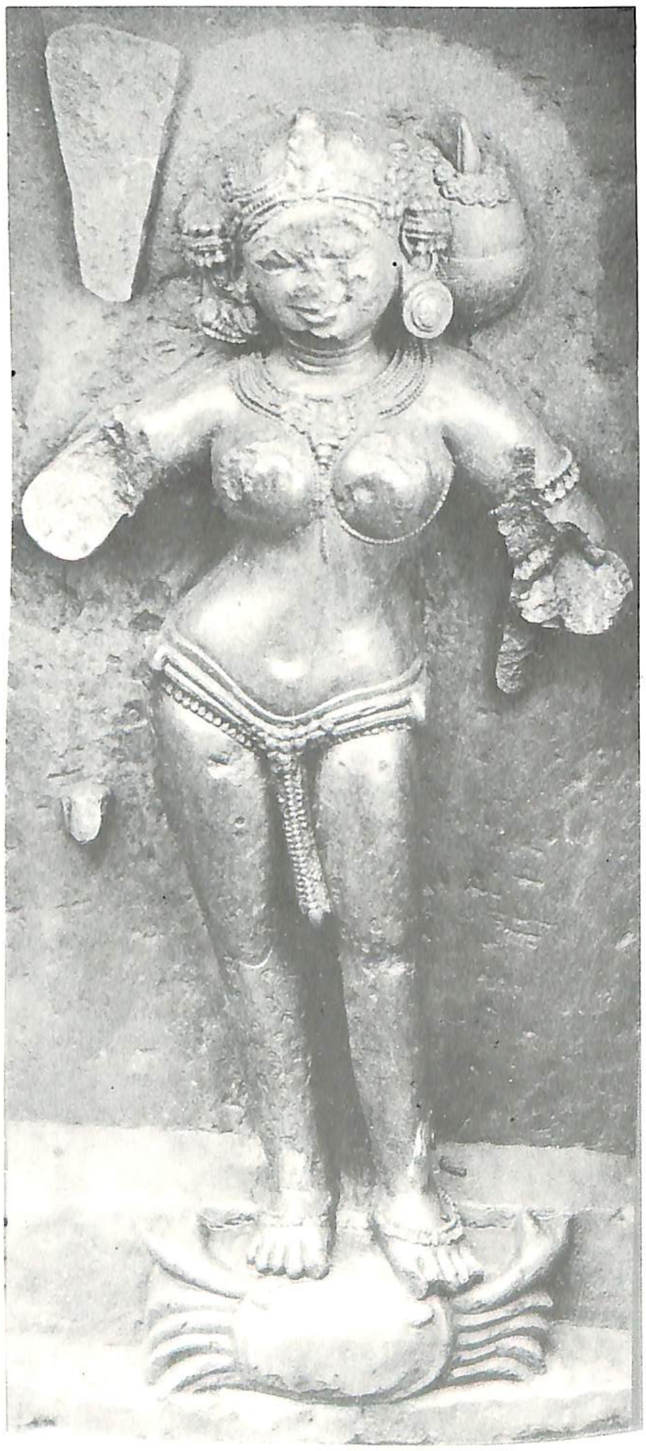
Kaula texts suggest indirectly that there is an underlying connection between the Yoginīs and the Yakṣiṇīs who are associated with trees and fertility. From the first century B.C., we have sculptural representations of Yakṣiṇīs, such as the clearly labelled Yakṣīs as the Bharhut stupa, who stand with one leg and arm entwined around the trunk of a tree and with the other arm drawing one of its flowering branches down towards them. The Yakṣiṇīs were believed to reside in the forests, and their touch could cause a tree to blossom or produce fruit (as ability extended poetically to all women). The *Kulārṇava Tantra* tells us that the Yoginīs of the Kula reside in trees known as *kulavṛkṣas,* and such trees were to be approached with worshipful attitude. Eight varieties of Kula trees are specified, with an admonishment never to cut such a tree or pluck its leaves, or to sleep under it.[83] The Kaula *Śāktānandataraṅgiṇī* also speaks of Kula Yoginīs residing in Kula trees.[84] The implication seems to be that the Kula Yoginīs were in some manner connected with or derived from the concept of Yakṣiṇīs. Interestingly, even without looking into Kaula texts, Coomaraswamy believed that the sixty-four Yoginīs must originally have been Yakṣiṇīs.[85]

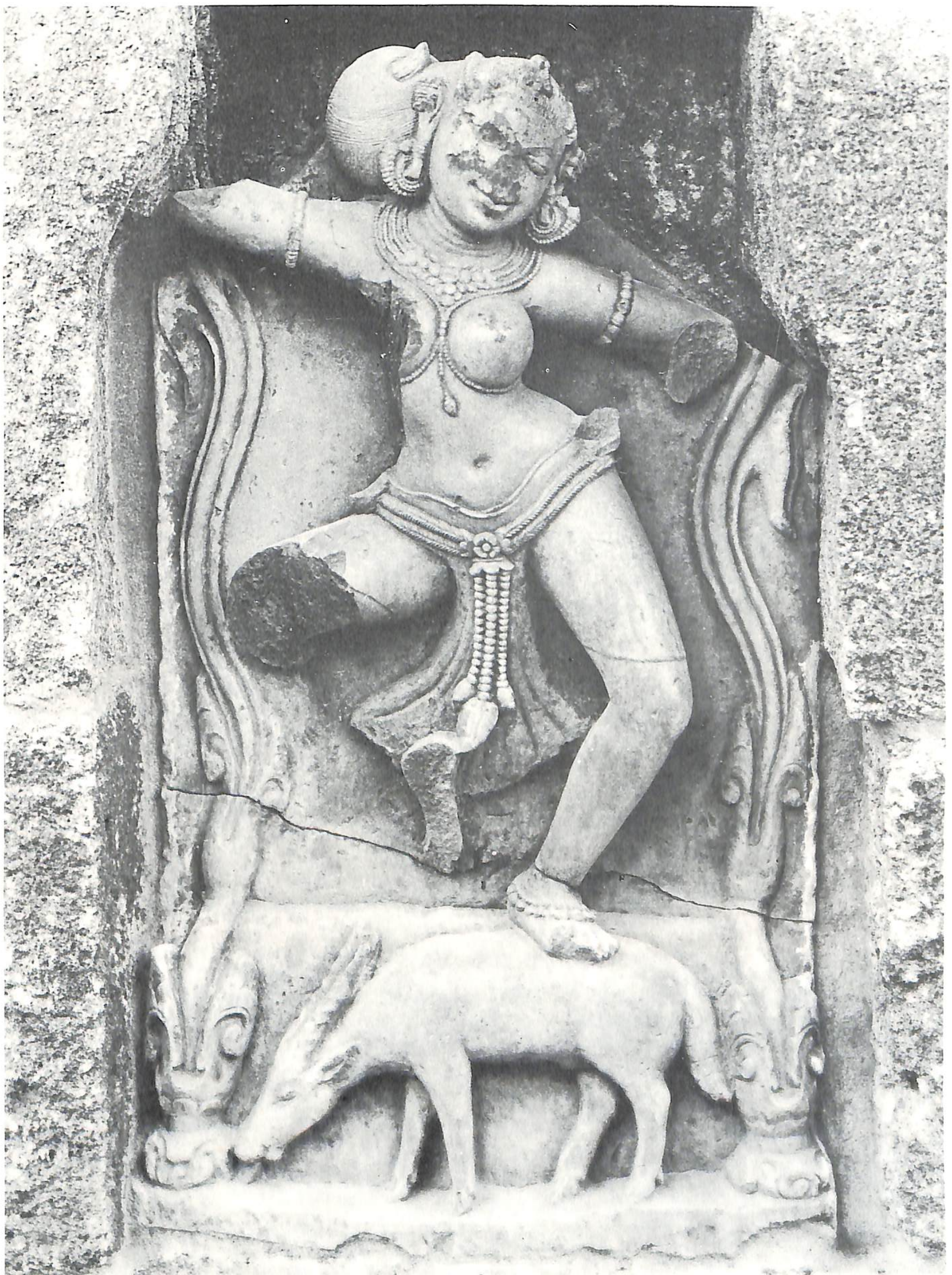
The Kaula *Uḍḍīśa Tantra* which is a treatise on magic, contains a chapter entitled *Yakṣiṇī Sādhanā* which tells us that the Yakṣiṇīs may be approached as sister, mother, daughter or wife.[86] These Yakṣiṇīs, who can assume varying forms *(nānārūpadharā),* will, when appropriately worshipped, give the devotee all his desires. The chapter concludes with a series of verses regarding the worship of the Yakṣiṇī as wife, with instructions to the *sādhaka* to prepare a couch strewn with flowers upon which to adore the Yakṣiṇī, who will arrive at midnight and lead the *sādhaka* into the pleasures of love. This same basic approach is described in a set of Kaula manuscripts entitled *Yoginī Sādhanā Pryoga,* and others called *Yoginī Sādhanā,* most of which appear to be derived from the *Bhūtaḍāmara Tantra.*[87] It is specified here that the Yoginī may be worshipped as mother, sister or wife; when worshipped as wife, the Yoginī will make the *sādhaka* into the foremost among kings *(rajendraḥ sarvarājānām).* In at least one of these versions, the term Yoginī and Yakṣiṇī are used interchangeably, and this same text specifies too that worship during the day is appropriate for *dakṣiṇa mārga* rites, while *vāmamārga* worship (involving the literal enaction of such ritual) should be performed at night.[88]

Further indirect evidence on the connection between Yoginīs and Yakṣiṇīs comes from the treatment in Hindu tantras of the Jain goddess Padmāvatī, a tantric deity whose worship was carried out to acquire a variety of magical abilities. The *Yoginī Tantra* calls Padmāvatī a Yoginī and quotes Padmāvatī's *mantra* for forseeing the future through dreams. The *Mahāyakṣinī Tantra* gives this *mantra* of Padmāvatī and refers to it as *aṣṭamahāsiddhi-yakṣiṇī-prayoga,* indicating that Padmāvatī is a Yakṣiṇī and also that the eight major *siddhis* (magical powers) are to be acquired by Yakṣiṇī worship.[89]

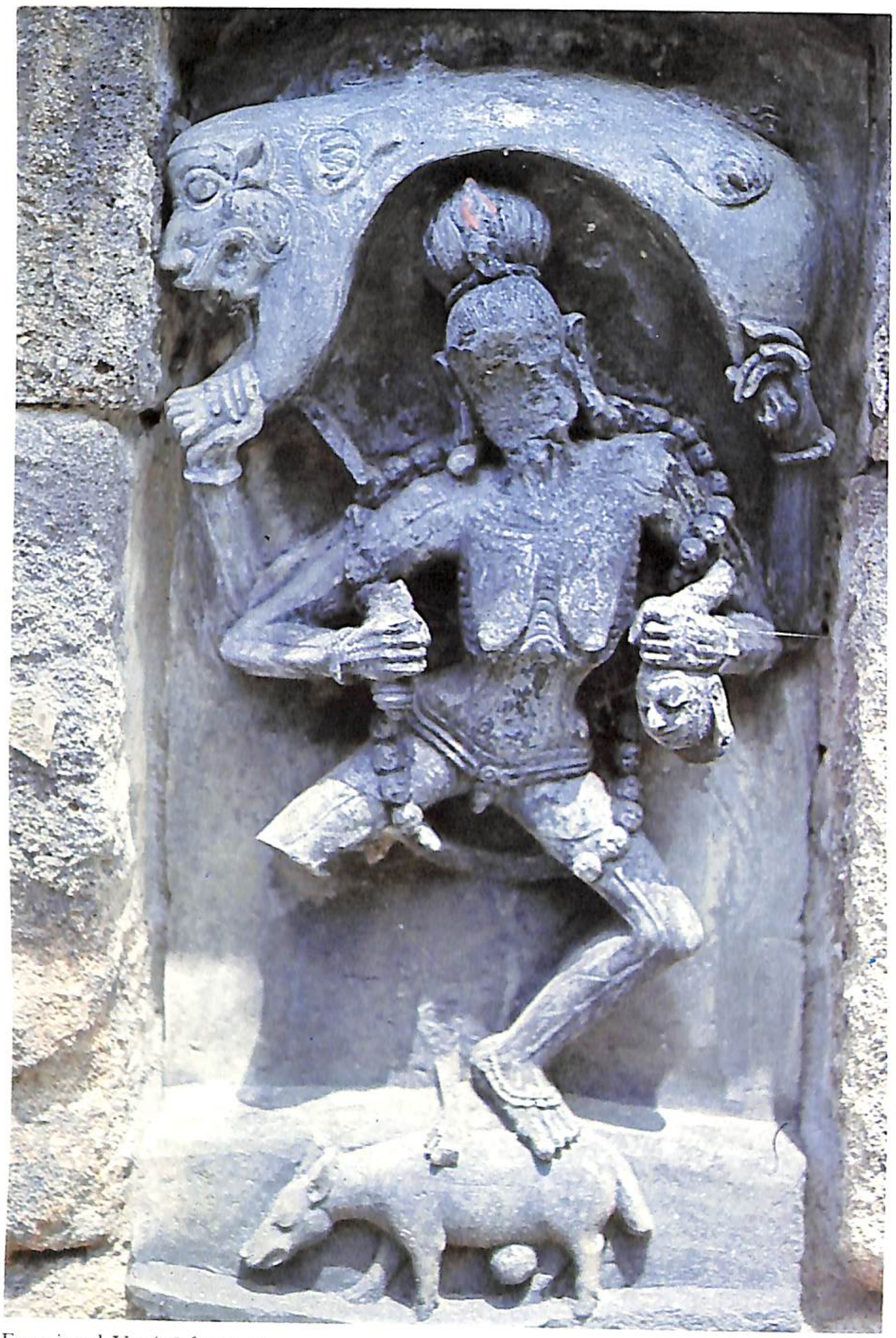
Of relevance here is a manuscript entitled *Yakṣiṇī Prayoga* which lists the names of an entire series of Yakṣiṇīs and describes

Hirapur Yoginī on a crab (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)





Hirapur Yogini on a black buck (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



Emaciated Yoginī from Hirapur

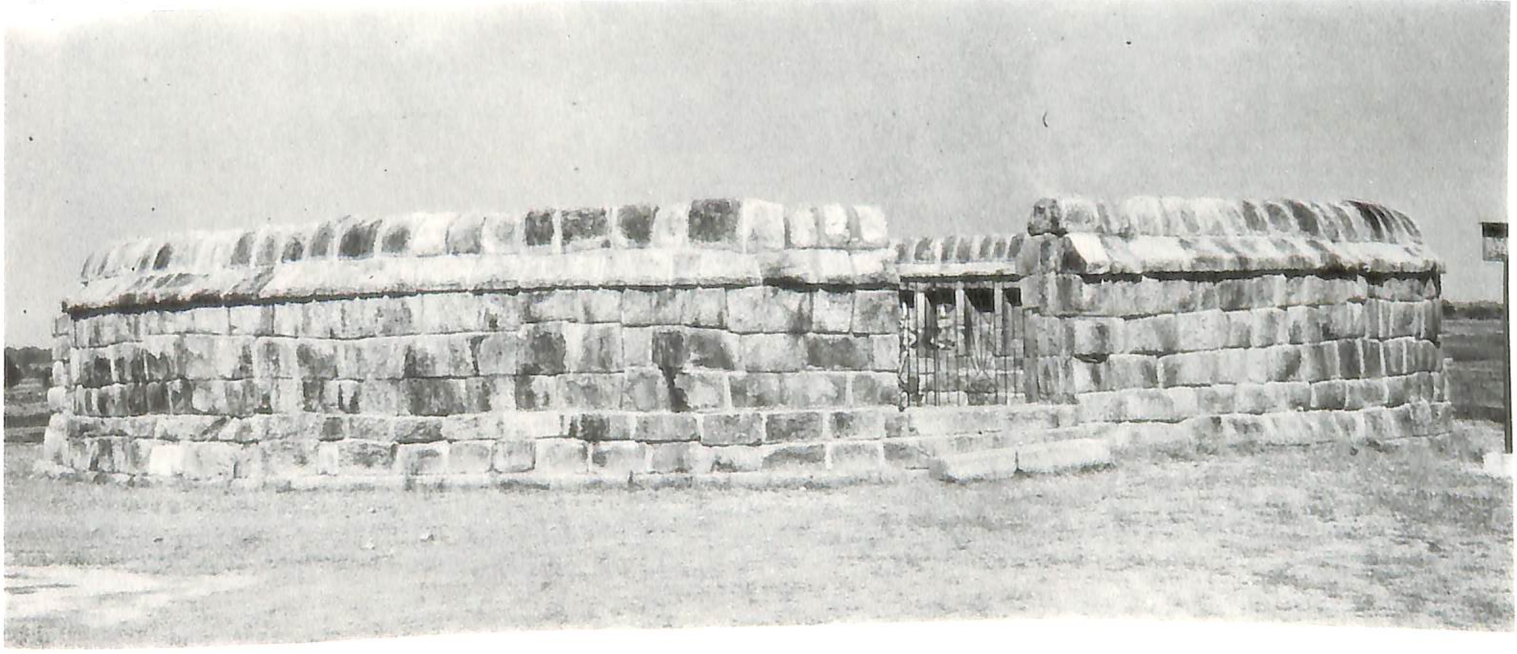
the method of invoking and approaching each.[90] These Yakṣiṇīs are considered goddesses of no mean order: they could bestow on their worshippers magical powers including moving in the air *(ākāśa-gamana)*, immortality *(rasāyana)*, vision at a distance *(dūradarśana)* and other abilities parallel to those that accrue, as we shall see in a later chapter, from worship of those Kaula goddesses, the Yoginīs.

2. The Circle And Cakras of Yoginīs

The Yoginī temple generally takes for its form the circle, that purest and simplest of symbols, yet one of the most powerful and widely used. The circle represents the Sun, the seeing eye, the zodiac, time and eternity; it is Nothing and yet it is All. It is the shape that expresses most effectively the complementary concepts of completeness and separateness: a circle is complete in itself and separated from everything outside of it. The circle is also a symbol of the Self, of a self-contained psychic whole. "It expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature" and "always points to the single most vital aspect of life—its ultimate wholeness."[1] In certain schools of thought such as Zen, the circle symbolizes human perfection and hence Enlightenment. Texts that refer to the Yoginīs invariably speak of them as forming a *cakra* or *vṛnda,* both words meaning a circle.

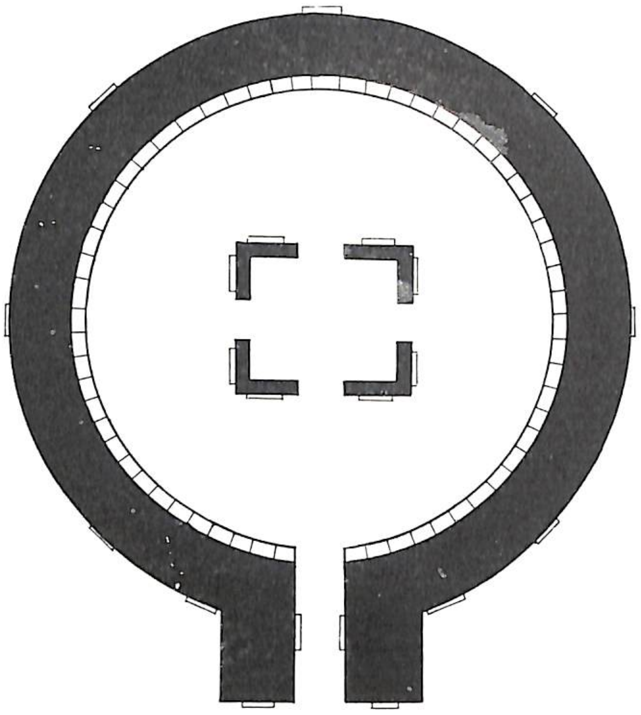
Temples of the Yoginīs, architecturally dissimilar to all other shrines in India, represent a tradition that stands well apart from the main stream of temple architecture. Existing temples of the Yoginīs, while confirming that the circular ground plan was customary and the most prevalent, reveals also the existence of a few instances of the less familiar rectangular plan. All the temples, however, are hypaethral or open to the sky, with neither tower,

Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial, Orissa

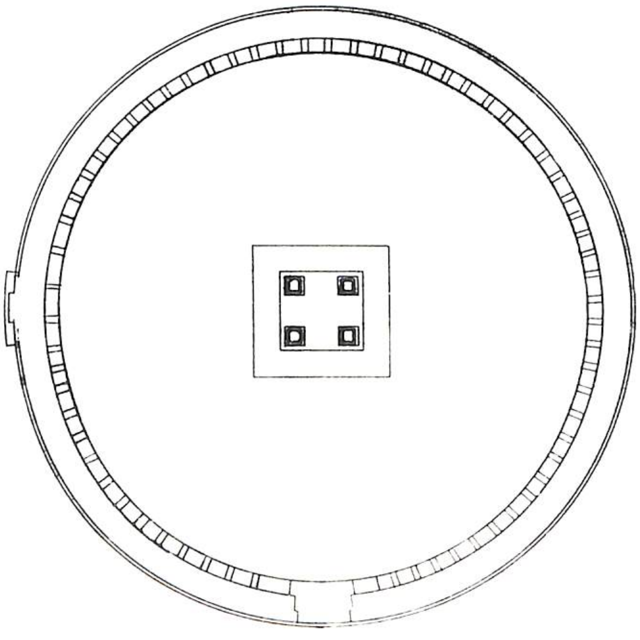


roof nor hidden, sacred area common to all other Indian temples. The enclosing stone walls, between six and ten feet in height, are generally plain on the exterior and the entrance into the temples is more in the nature of an interruption in the circular wall, resulting in a simple undecorated doorway located on the east. The circular enclosures are of varying sizes, ranging from Hirapur which is only 25 feet in diameter to Bheraghat which is 125 feet across; all such details will be discussed at the appropriate places.

On the inner walls of the temples are a series of niches, sixty-four, eighty-one or forty-two, each containing a sculpted image of a Yoginī. At the centre of the circle is an open shrine dedicated to Bhairava who, as we have seen, seems to have been regarded as the leader of the goddesses. In some temples, the original central shrine remains intact and at Ranipur-Jharial for instance, we see a small pillared pavilion housing an image of the dancing Śiva. At Hirapur, the central shrine was clumsily rebuilt in recent years after the disappearance of the original Śiva image which was in situ twenty years ago. The Mitauli temple has at its centre a large pillared circular pavilion which must once have housed an image of Śiva, probably accompanied by his entourage, but this shrine is now unfortunately empty. In view of the repeated textual evidence that we have seen for the placement of Bhairava at the centre of the group of Yoginīs, it is evident that this central shrine existed in all Yoginī temples. These remarkable shrines are often situated on the tops of hills and are usually in isolated locations on the outskirts of towns. The simple temples of the Yoginīs are unique in a country which specializes in tall, elaborate shrine towers *(śikharas)* and impressive gateways *(toraṇas* and *gopuras)* and where decorative carvings and figural sculptures cover every inch of space on temple walls.



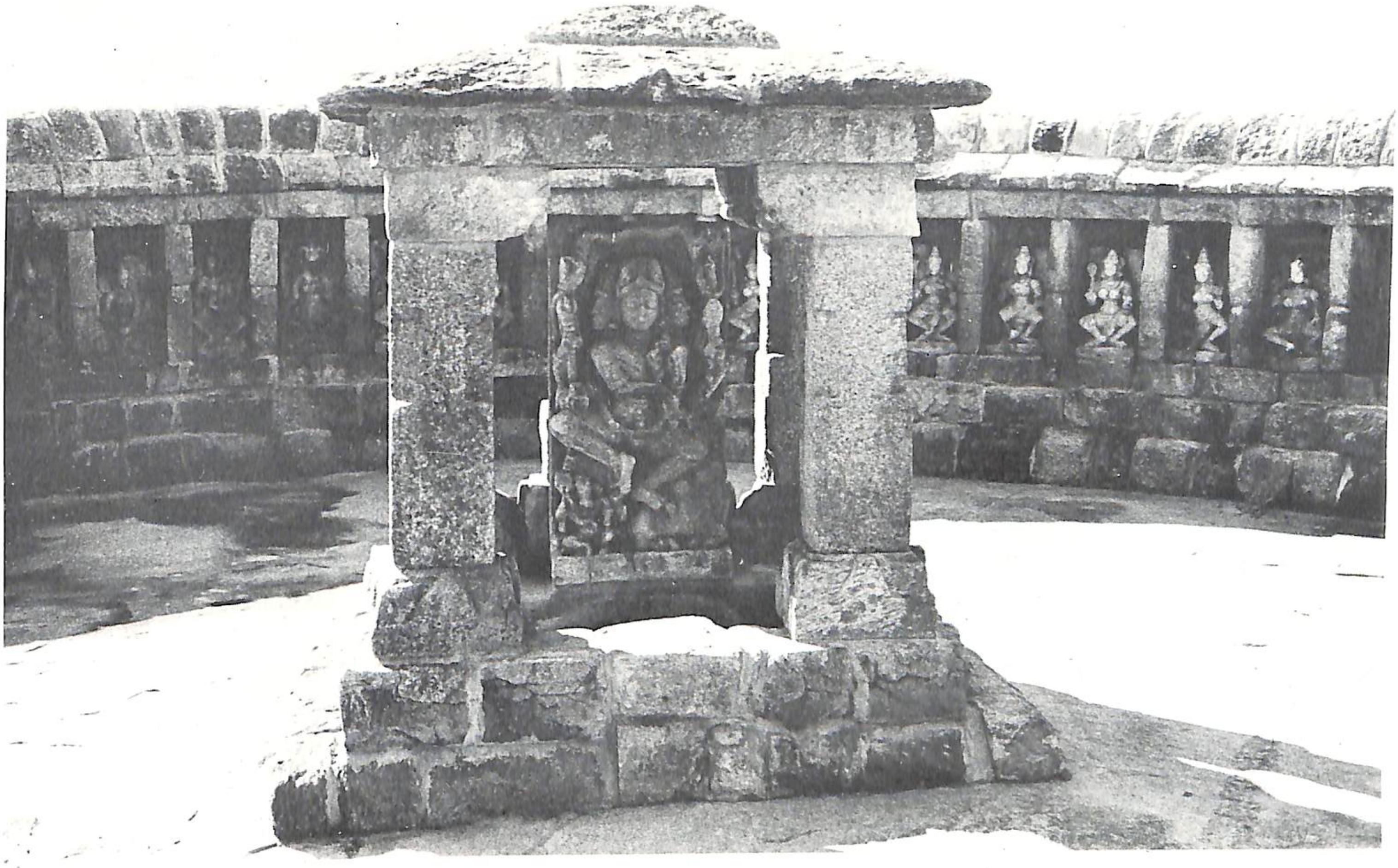
Plan of Hirapur temple, Orissa



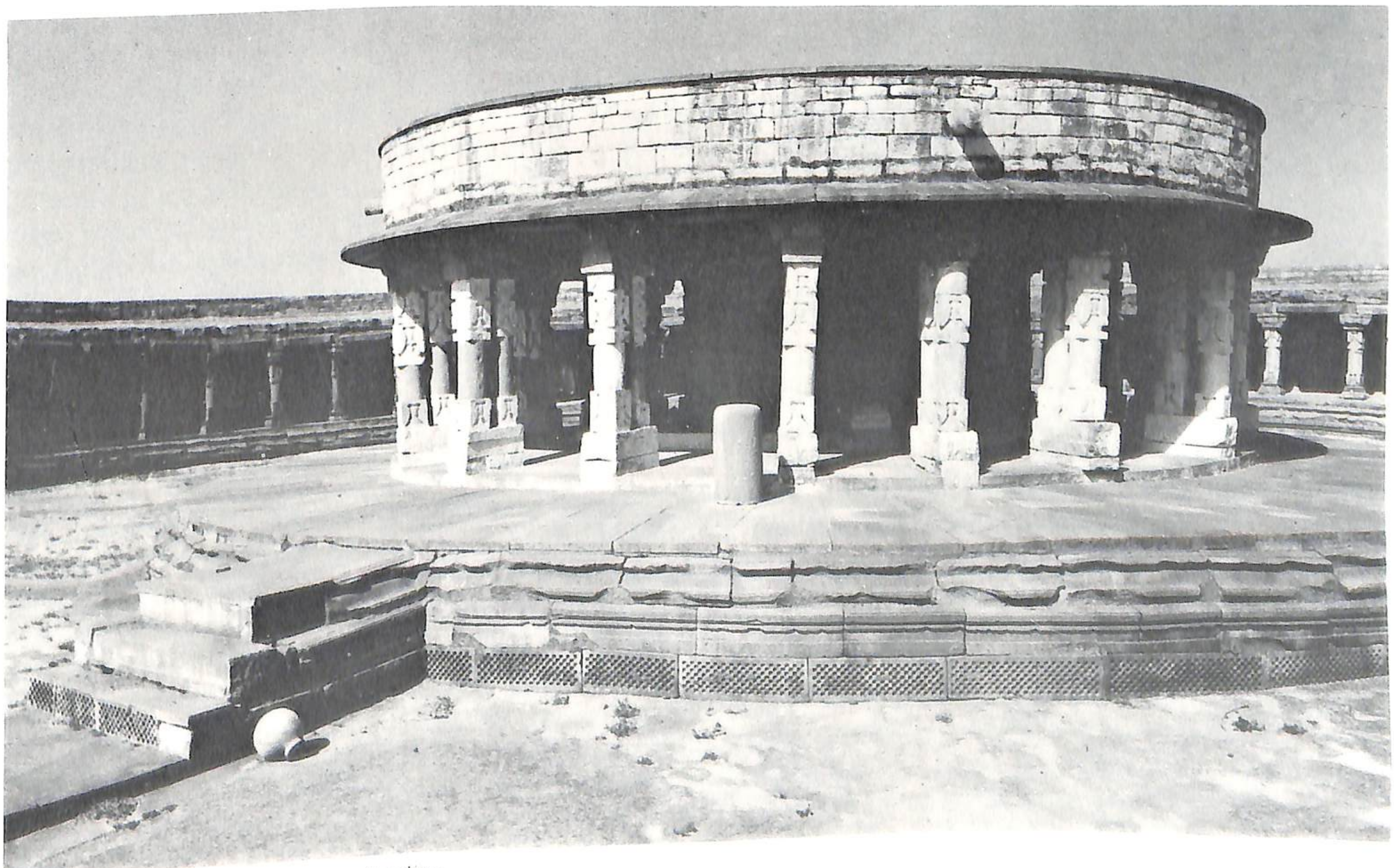
Plan of Ranipur-Jharial temple, Orissa

Circles have been used all over the world since ancient times to mark the boundaries of sacred areas, to set these apart from mundane usage and to protect them from harmful external influences. Prehistoric stone circles such as Avebury and the more famous Stonehenge testify to this use of the circle, and in addition, the circular form of these and other shrines also involve astrological symbolism. The circular sanctuary of Athena at the famous Greek oracle of Delphi or the large circular marble "tholos" at Epidaurus must also have had a similar significance. The circle is also a protective barrier, specially in magic ceremonial where magical energy is not allowed to dissipate but is contained and concentrated within the boundaries of the circle. Also relevant in this context is the age-old rite of circumambulation which involves ceremonially walking in a circle around the object of worship before bowing down in front of it.

The circle is of great importance in the Buddhist world. The Buddha had set in motion the wheel of law, and the round shape of the wheel became a basic element in Buddhist symbolism. The Buddhist stupa is hemispherical, and circular shrines in India are often found to be Buddhist, deriving their plan from the requirement of containing and enclosing a stupa. A circular temple at Bairat enshrined a stupa, as did a circular domed cave at Guntupalli and a similar pillared cave at Junnar.[2]

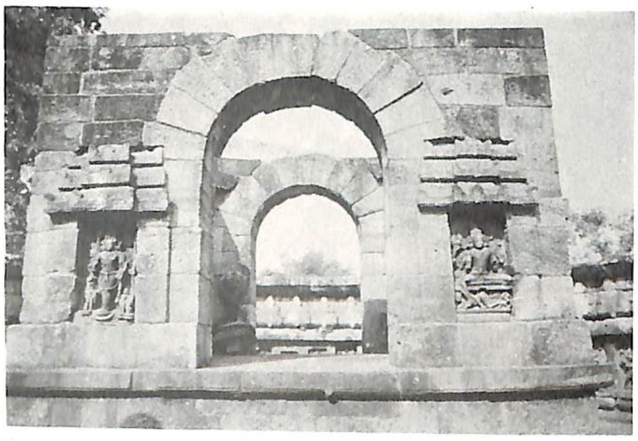


Interior of the Ranipur-Jharial temple, Orissa



Central shrine of Mitauli temple near Gwalior

The various architectural and Purāṇic texts that list the varieties of Indian temples, specify a large number of shrines based on the principle of the square and the rectangle, and they include also a classification of purely circular temples. As far as we can determine from extant remains, the *vartula* or circular temple was not much in vogue and remained mostly a theoretical classification. The 6th century *Bṛhatsamhitā* refers to such circular shrines and the *Agni Purāṇa* lists nine types of circular temples.[3] The *Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra,* written by Paramara king Bhoja who ruled between 1018-1060, enumerates a total of sixty-four temples of which ten are circular.[4] Bhoja speaks of circular temple plans consisting of 64 and 100 *padas* (steps or measures) which were to be used in the construction of circular shrines.[5] He specifies that the *Valaya* (circular) temple is known as Maṇḍūka when it has only one entrance (as in most Yoginī shrines) and as Caturmukha when it has four doorways. Although such textual evidence for the circular temple exists, it does not in actual practice appear to have been a customary plan, with the exception of certain medieval shrines with conical towers in Kerala and our circular unroofed temples of the Yoginīs.


Reconstructed central shrine of Hirapur temple, Orissa (Courtesy: T. Donaldson, Cleveland)

Cakras, Maṇḍalas and Yantras

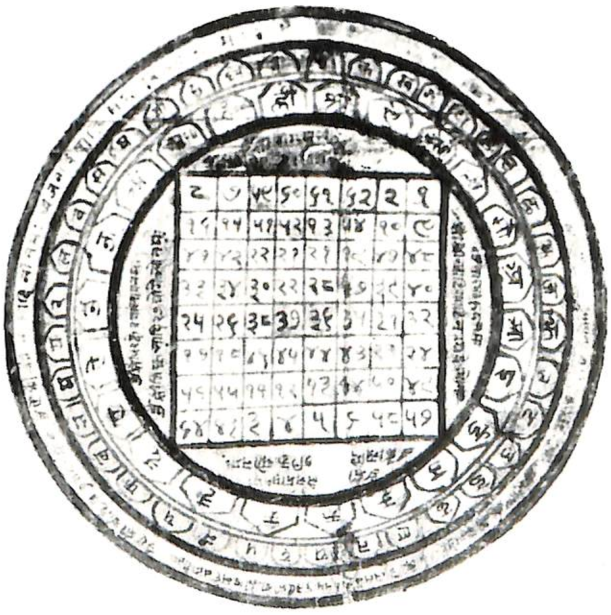
A Cakra, literally interpreted, means a wheel or circle, but in our context it is a circular formation intended for specialised tantric ritual. A Cakra consisting of circles, lines, triangles and petals in a set formation may be drawn on the ground, on cloth or paper, or on a flat sheet of metal and used for personal worship or as an aid to meditation. When images of multiple Yoginīs are thus placed within a circular enclosure, we get a Yoginī Cakra or a Yoginī temple. In advanced meditative technique, the deities and Yoginīs of a Cakra are sometimes visualised as existing internally within the body and are to be offered symbolic worship.[6] Though the existence of such symbolic deities within one's body is mentioned in tantric texts, Cakras in general are external configurations and used primarily for tantric worship.

The word 'Maṇḍala', usually meaning a circle, is frequently used to describe the shrines of the Mātṛkās. The word Maṇḍala may also be understood as a square but not as a rectangle, and it is hence surprising that the shrines of the Mothers are always rectangular and those of the Yoginīs occasionally so. The Hindu temple is based on a Maṇḍala known as the Vāstu Puruṣa Maṇḍala which is basically in the form of a square. The circle and the square are combined in painted Maṇḍalas, both Buddhist and Hindu. The purely circular plan, marginally altered to result in what is known as *quadratura circuli*[7] or the squaring of the circle, is seen in all Maṇḍalas, and even those based entirely on a circle are enclosed by an outer square formation known as the *bhūpura.* Such a configuration, with a central focus, has frequently been used for the ground plans of cities. Not dictated by considerations of aesthetics, a Maṇḍala plan transforms the city "into an ordered cosmos, a sacred place bound by its center to the other world...Every building sacred or secular, that has a Maṇḍala ground plan is the projection of an architypal image from within the human consciousness into the outer world. The city, the fortress, and the temple become symbols of psychic wholeness, and in this way exercise a specific influence on the human being who enters or lives in the place".[8]

The word 'Yantra' may be regarded as a generic term used to describe all varieties of symbolic diagrams intended for meditative or ritual worship, and the use of the Maṇḍala and the Cakra are basic to tantric ceremonial. Apart from consecrating a sacred area, the Maṇḍala or Yantra is also a cosmogram. A somewhat parallel idea is seen in the sane paintings made by the Navaho Indians in order to heal their sick who are required to walk in a circle around the Maṇḍala-structured sand-painting before entering to sit within it. By this process they try "to bring a sick person back into harmony with himself and the cosmos, and thereby restore his health".[9] In the case of the Hindu Maṇḍala or Yantra, a devotee after long meditation finally identifies himself with its centre, at which stage the configuration becomes a "psychocosmogram".[10] We shall see that Cakras and Maṇḍalas, incised on metal sheets or drawn on scrolls or leaves, were exceedingly important in the worship of the Yoginīs, with some texts going so far as to say that worship without a Maṇḍala is fruitless and does not please the deity.[11] It appears probable that worship through such diagrams was the earlier mode of propitiation of the Yoginīs, and that stone temples to house images of these goddesses came at a later stage.

Cakras of Sixty-four Yoginīs

Yoginīs are popularly worshipped and visualized as existing in a group of sixty-four and all known name-lists of Yoginīs as well as surviving temples of the Yoginīs confirm that sixty-four was indeed the customary number for these goddesses. How was this number arrived at in grouping the Yoginīs? Numbers and numerology have always been of importance in India where they still retain a position of prominence, both in the science of astrology which remains a major preoccupation and in ritualistic worship which, to the present day, is a fundamental part of the practice of the Hindu religion. To this day one will hear it stated that ten is a number to be used specially by Brahmins and twelve by Kṣatriyas. Sixteen is of significance as representing the lunar system upon which the Hindu calendar is based. The number sixteen remained important enough to form the basic unit of Indian currency, and prior to recent decimalisation the Indian rupee was divided into sixteen *annas* and each *anna* into four pices.



Detail from Yoginī Cakra seen on page 21

An examination of ancient literature, both religious and secular, reveals that the number four and its multiples of eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty-four, sixty-four and eighty-four were of prominence from an early date. In India one always speaks of the eight directions—four cardinal points and four intermediate ones. While the Vedas themselves refer only to the four main directions, eight became the standardized number soon thereafter, each direction being presided over by a deity known as a *dikpāla*. Eight became an auspicious number[12] assigned to the forms of various deities, be it Agni, Vināyaka, Śiva or Devī. It became traditional to consider a variety of objects to be eight in number, whether they were the sacred snakes or the treasures of Kubera; the gestures of the hand or the types of metal; the stages in the path of Yoga or the various divisions of the science of architecture. The letters of the Sanskrit alphabet too were divided into eight categories. The Mātṛkās or Mothers were also frequently considered to be eight in number, and there were eight corresponding Bhairavas. Eight too was the number assigned to the major magical powers or *siddhis* that could be acquired through a variety of ritual practices.

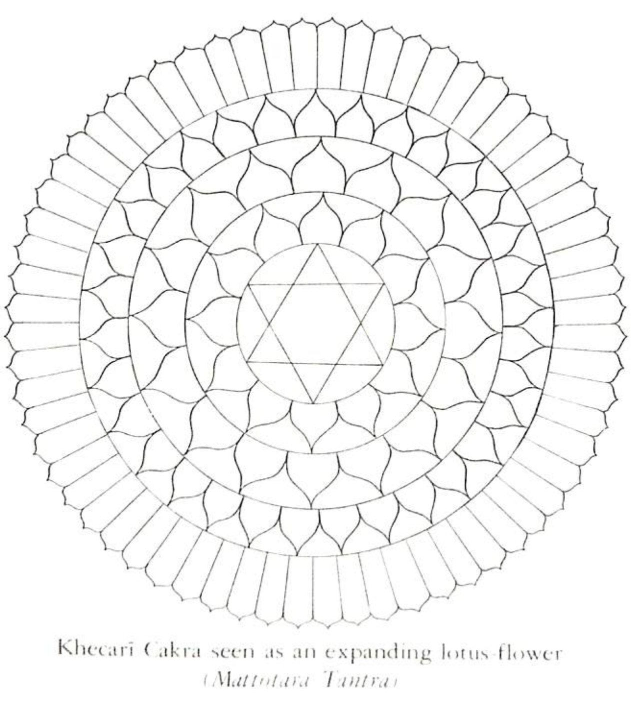
If eight is an auspicious number, then sixty-four as the square of eight, is even more potent and efficacious. In late Vedic literature, sixty-four is already a special number, and the *Aitereya Brāhmaṇa* refers to the 64th step as the last magical step that gives entry into the heavenly world.[13] In the *Mahābhārata,* sixty-four is already a recognized, traditional number: Kṛṣṇa is hit by 64 arrows in his fight with Rukmi, while Karṇa pierced Bhīṣma's armour with 64 arrows. The belief that the arts *(kalās)* are traditionally 64 in number dates back to the early centuries A.D. and were enumerated by Vātsyāyana in his famous *Kāmasūtra.* Vātsyāyana listed further a set of 64 erotic arts put together by an earlier author, commenting that while he was adding to such arts, he would retain the term *catuṣaṣṭi* or 64, since it was already a traditional term and an auspicious number.[14] The Great Goddess herself is seen as an embodiment of the 64 arts and addressed as *Catuṣaṣṭi-kalāmayī,* and she is worshipped with 64 varieties of offerings.[15]

It is significant to note that the 6th century *Bṛhatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira specifies that the diagram for the floor plan of a temple should be divided into sixty-four squares (the *maṇḍūka maṇḍala*).[16] For Varāhamihira, the only other permissable Maṇḍala is one of 81 squares which we shall consider shortly. While certain other numbers were introduced later, 64 and 81 remained numbers of prime importance for temple Maṇḍalas. It is intriguing to find the universe itself described in Buddhist text as a board of eight by eight squares, fastened by golden cords.[17]

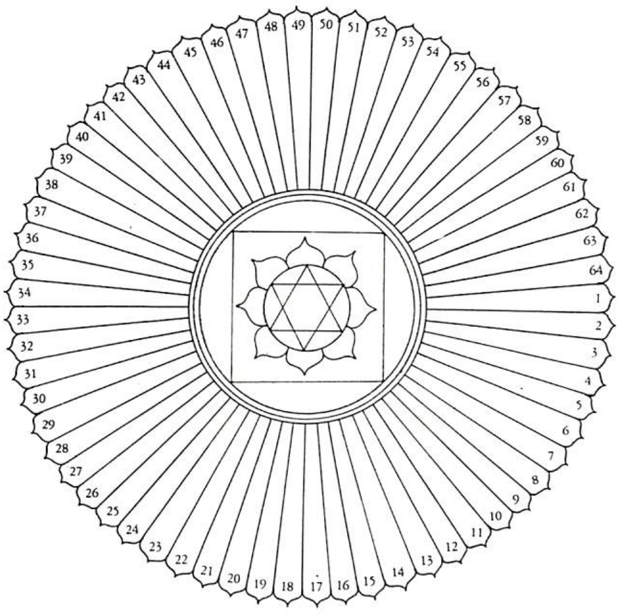
The number sixty-four attains even greater significance in tantric literature with the Agamas and Tantras themselves said to number 64. In tantric texts the earlier concept of the eight Bhairavas is now expanded to 64; reference is made to 64 *mantras;* and there appears to have been a concept of 64 *pīṭhas* or sites sacred to the Goddess.[18] In view of the fact that worship of the Yoginīs is said to grant *siddhis* or magical perfections, it is perhaps significant that the Indian tradition knows not only of eight but also of 64 *siddhis*.[19] It is possible that the theory of 64 magical powers may have influenced the number chosen for the Yoginīs since, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Yoginīs are so closely connected with the theory of *siddhis*.

Khecarī Cakra of 64 Yoginīs

This elaborate circular formation of Yoginīs, described in the *Matottara Tantra*,[20] may be visualized as an expanding or unfolding lotus flower with a Yoginī seated on each of its many petals. Śiva and Śakti, at the centre of the lotus, are surrounded by successive layers of lotus petals, starting with a layer of twelve and proceeding through circles of 24 and 32 petals into the full-blown circle of



Khecarī Cakra seen as an expanding lotus flower (*Mattotara Tantra*) sixty-four. We are told that Devī's desire to create *(icchā)* produces twelve powerful and fearsome Yoginīs of glowing colours, decorated with a variety of ornaments and with twelve arms each. All twelve are intoxicated with their own youth and sway gently through the effect of wine. Each has her own mount, is powerful enough to raise the dead, and can bestow all the magical *siddhis* on the worshipper. The agitation *(kṣobha)* caused by the twelve Yoginīs results in the formation of a circle of twenty-four Yoginīs, of great potency and glory. They are described individually in the text, which gives the colour and appearance of each, the objects in their hands and their *vāhanas.* Many of them are portrayed as flushed or as having rolling eyes due to the intoxicating effect of wine. The next stage in the expanding lotus is a circle of thirty-two Yoginīs who are intoxicated with their own power and who possess the ability to assume any form they desire. All thirty-two are young, short and round-bellied; they hold varying weapons in thier hands and have their own mounts.

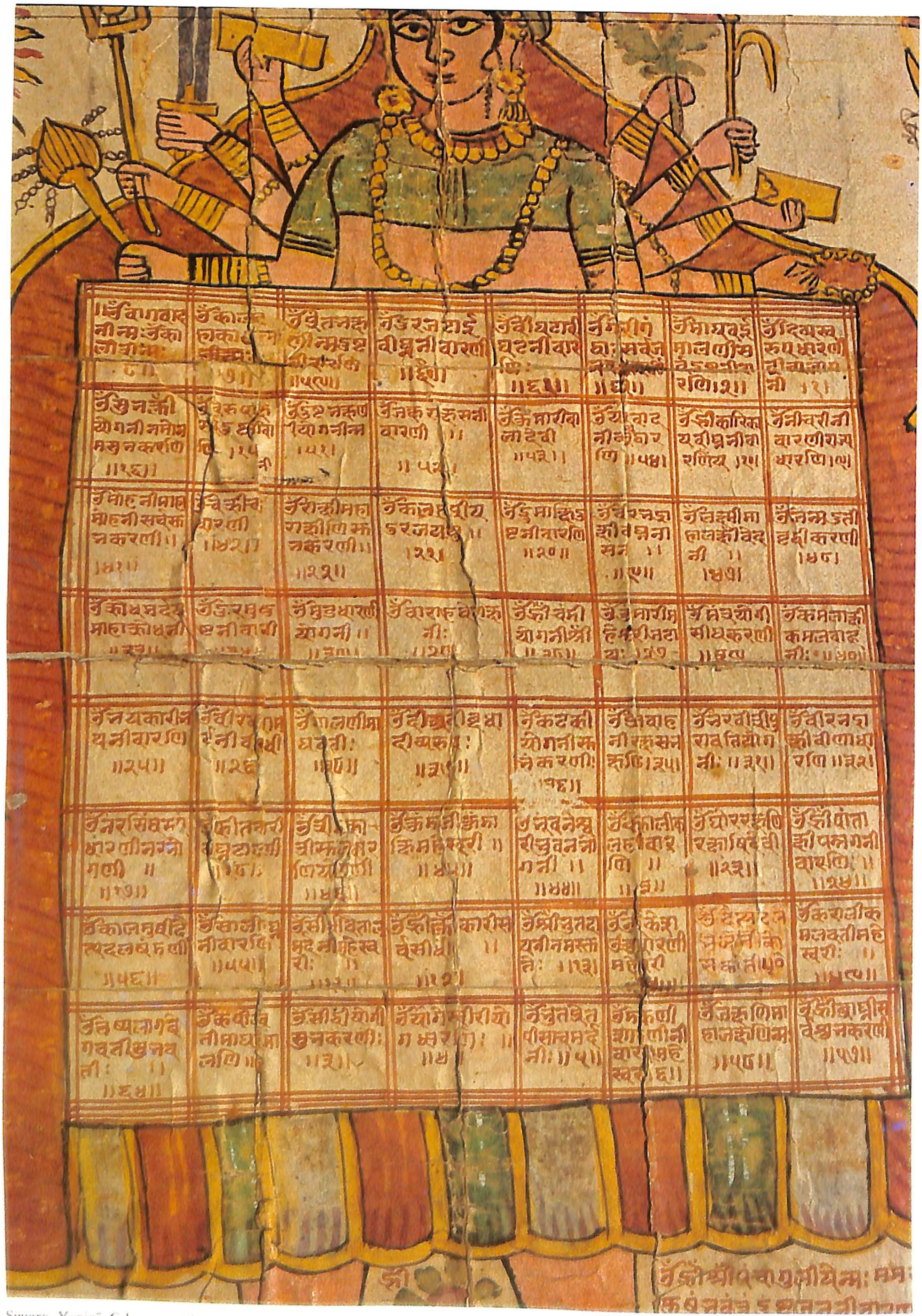


Khecarī Cakra: Yantra of the sixty-four (according to the *Mattotara Tantra)*

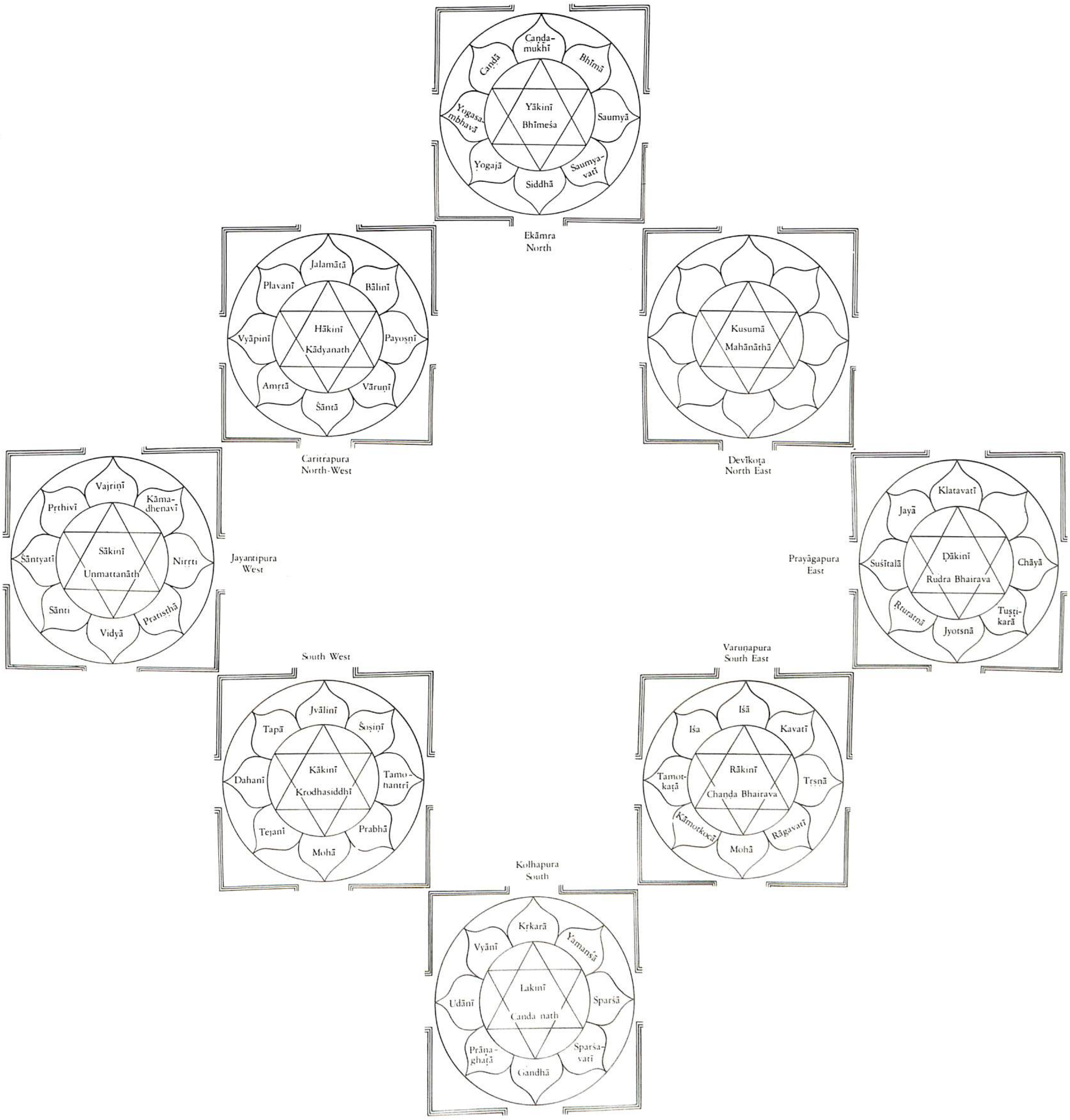
From the power and joy of these thirty-two results the fully expanded, full-blown lotus of 64 petals with its 64 magnificent Yoginīs and the colour of each goddess and her mount is clearly stated in the text. All 64 are four-armed and hold a club and noose in their left hands and a spear and cord in their right hands. All have perfect limbs and are beautifully adorned with many jewels. The *Matottara* describes them as emerging from the body of Kubjikā *(kubjikā tanu sambhavā),* or in other words as the creations of Devī. It tells us that these Yoginīs of the Khecarī Cakra will bestow all magical powers, both physical and mental, when appropriately worshipped. The term *khecara* means moving in the sky, and such aerial power was one of the important magical abilities acquired through worship of this Cakra. The 64 Yoginīs of the Khecara Cakra belong to a tradition excluding Mātṛkās, and an analysis of this and other similar lists will be found in Appendix II. A later section of the *Matottara Tantra* provides explicit instructions on how to draw the Yantra of the 64 Yoginīs.[21] A central star (literally a six-pointed diamond) is to be surrounded by an eight-petalled lotus enclosed within a square. Beyond this are to be drawn three circles, followed by 64 petals to seat the 64 Yoginīs.

Yoginī Cakra of 64 Yoginīs

The 64 Yoginīs of the Yoginī Cakra, also described in the *Matottara Tantra,*[22] comprise a group entirely different to those of the Khecarī Cakra. In fact, they stand on their own, not corresponding even partially to any known textual listings (See Appendix II). These Yoginīs are derived in sets of eight from the eight deities Ḍākinī, Rākinī, Lākinī, Kākinī, Sākinī, Hākinī, Yākinī and Kusumā. The 64 Yoginīs are described either as belonging to the family of the deity *(lākinī kula sambhūtā),* as emerging from her limbs *(sākinyaṅga samudbhūtā),* or as being born from her womb *(yākinī garbha sambhūtā).* The Yoginīs share all the qualities and attributes of the deity with whom they are associated. Each group of Yoginīs is visualized as seated on an eight-petalled lotus *(aṣṭāre paṅkaje stithā)* and each group is assigned a direction as well as a *kṣetra* or sacred town. Each group is also associated with a Bhairava

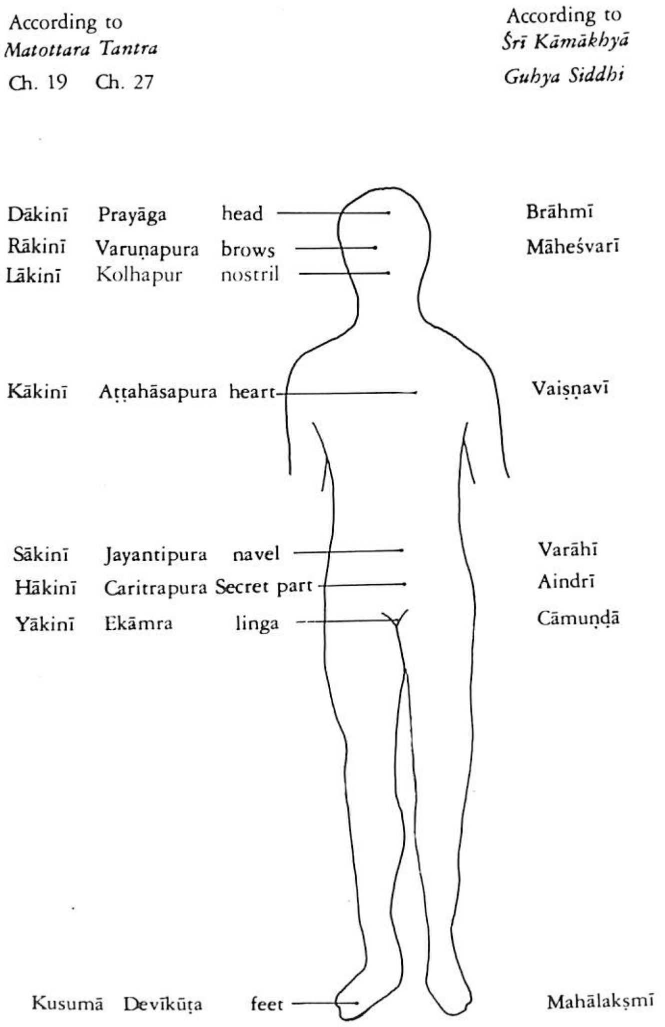


Square Yoginī Cakra superimposed upon Devī, Rajasthan painting on paper, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)


Caṇḍa-
mukhī
Caṇḍā
Bhīmā
Yākinī
Bhīmeśa
Yogasa-
mbhavā
Saumyā
Yogajā
Siddhā
Saumya-
vatī
Ekāmra
North
Jalamātā
Plavanī
Bālinī
Hākinī
Kādyanath
Vyāpinī
Payoṣṇī
Amṛtā
Vāruṇī
Śāntā
Caritrapura
North-West
Kusumā
Mahānāthā
Devīkoṭa
North East
Vajriṇī
Pṛthivī
Kāma-
dhenavī
Sākinī
Unmattanāth
Śāntyatī
Nirṛti
Jayantipura
West
Sānti
Pratiṣṭhā
Vidyā
Klatavatī
Jayā
Ḍākinī
Rudra Bhairava
Prayāgapura
East
Suśītalā
Chāyā
Ṛturatnā
Tuṣṭi-
karā
Jyotsnā
South West
Jvālinī
Tapā
Śoṣiṇī
Kākinī
Krodhasiddhī
Dahanī
Tamo-
hantrī
Tejanī
Prabhā
Mohā
Varuṇapura
South East
Iśā
Iśa
Kavatī
Rākinī
Chaṇḍa Bhairava
Tamot-
kaṭā
Tṛṣṇā
Kāmotkocā
Rāgavatī
Mohā
Kolhapura
South
Kṛkarā
Vyānī
Yamanyā
Lakinī
Caṇḍa nath
Udānī
Sparśā
Prāṇa-
ghaṭā
Sparśa-
vatī
Gandhā

Yoginī Cakra of the Sixty-four (according to the *Matottara Tantra*) who is said to sport with the Yoginīs *(krīḍate yoginī saha).* The Yoginīs of the Yoginī Cakra are described as young women, lavishly adorned and carrying various weapons. Intoxicated with their own youth and with senses sharpened through the pleasure of wine, they are at the peak of their prowess, and portrayed as being able to assume any shape and form they fancy and to go anywhere they desire.

External worship of these 64 Yoginīs in one large circle, or in eight smaller circles of eight Yoginīs each, must have been the main manner of worship of the Yoginī Cakra. However, the *Matottara* indicates in a later chapter that these Yoginīs could be located internally.[23] This suggestion emerges indirectly from a passage that gives an internal location to each of the eight sacred towns, the *kṣetras,* with which the groups of Yoginīs are associated. Following upon the location of these *kṣetras* and relating it to the Yoginī Cakra, we find that the *Matottara Tantra* assigns Ḍākinī to preside over the head, Rākinī over the brows and Lākinī over the nostrils. Kākinī belongs to the heart, Sākinī to the navel, Hākinī to the secret parts and Yākinī to the phallus, while the eighth deity Kusumā is placed at the feet. This system of location of these goddesses within the body is different from the more popularly known system of Tantra Yoga which visualizes the seven goddesses (omitting Kusumā) as the presiding divinities of the seven Cakras present in the subtle body of every human. It appears that the names of these powerful and well-known deities of the internal Cakras (with the addition of an eighth name) were utilised as a substratum around which to build up a Cakra of 64 Yoginīs. There seems to be no connection otherwise between the seven deities of the internal Cakras and the Yoginīs of this Yoginī Cakra.

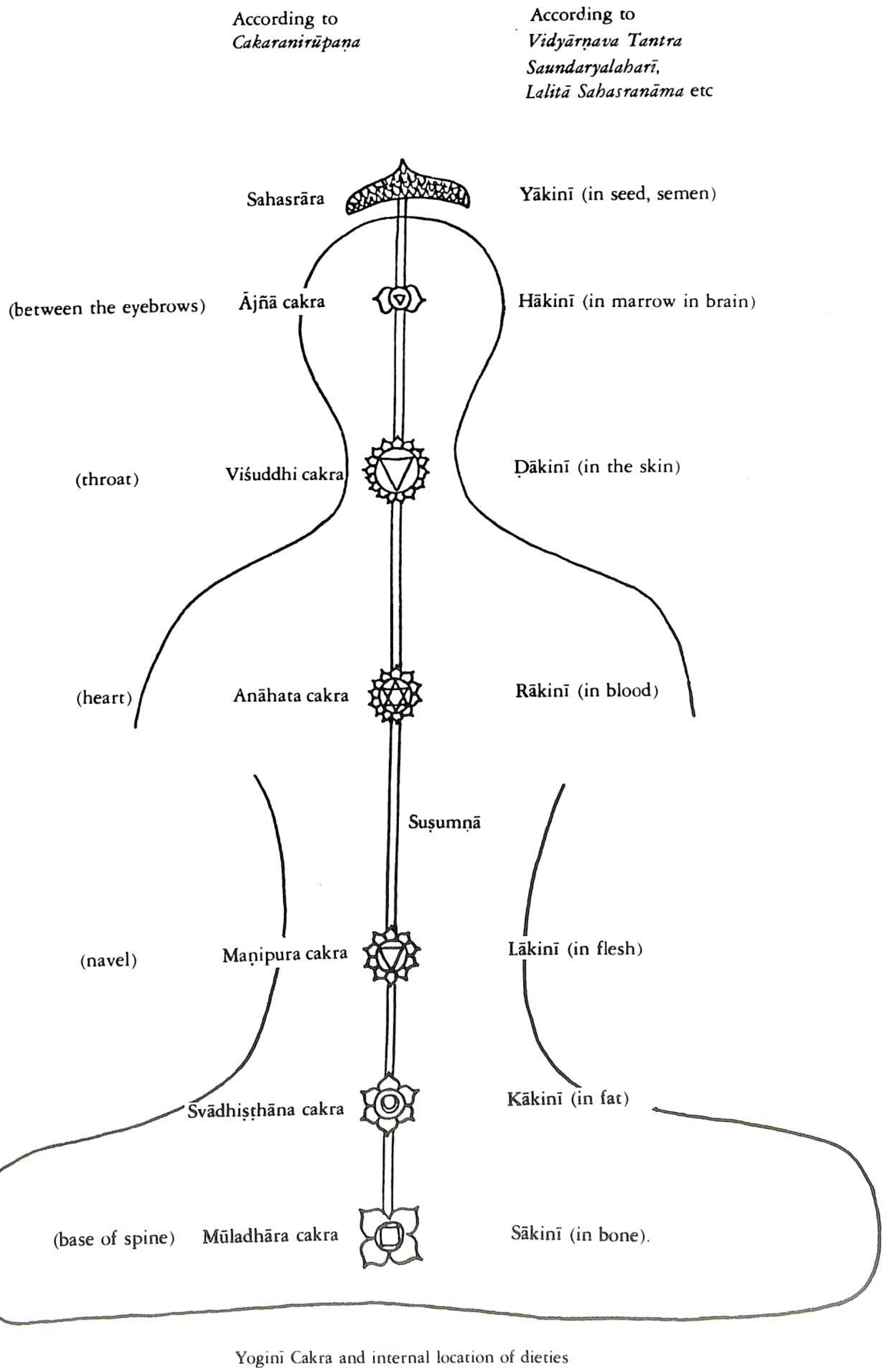


The internal Cakras and their Yoginīs

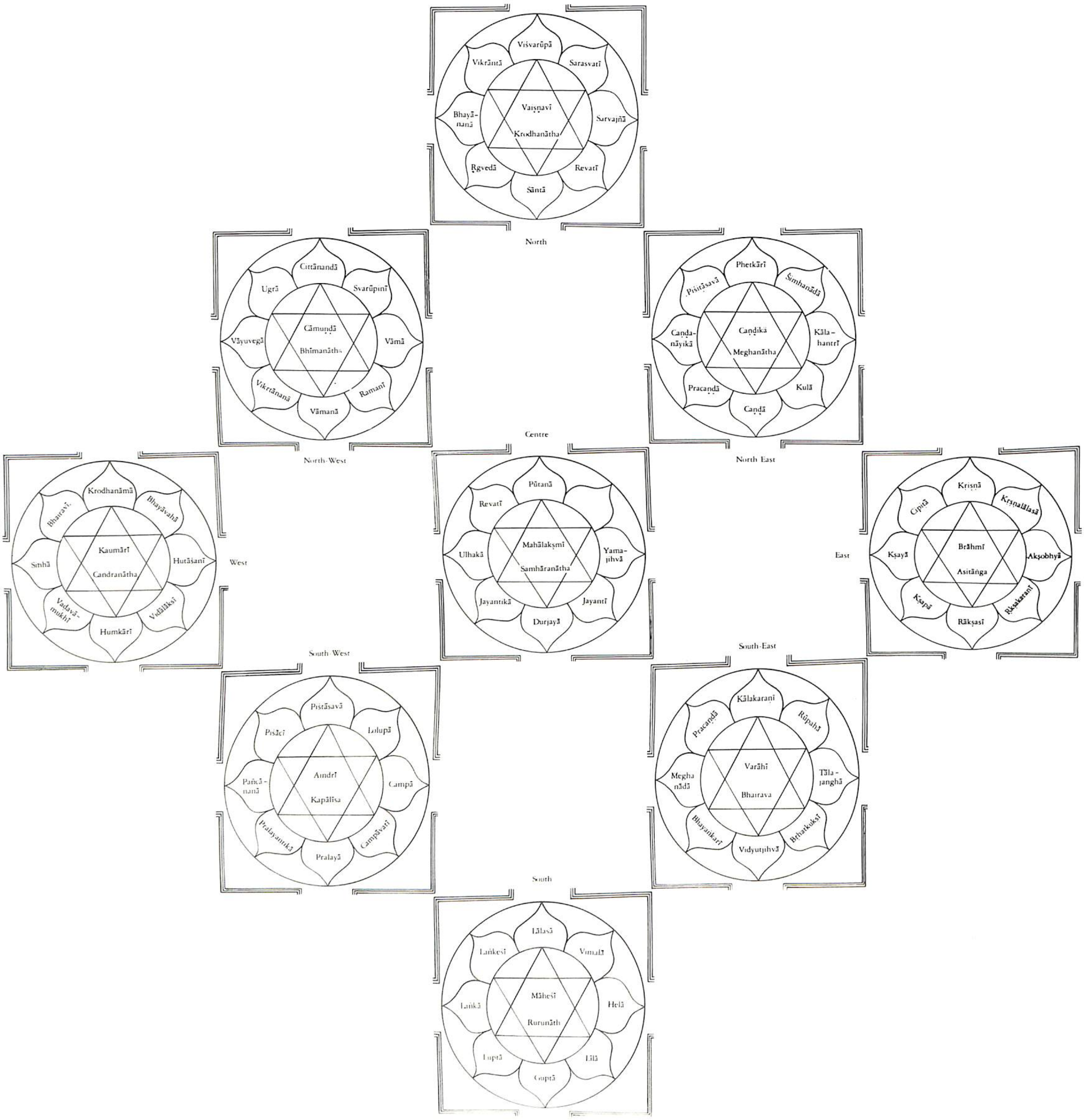
Mūla Cakra of Eighty-one Yoginīs

Nine is another auspicious number of major significance for ritualistic purposes. Nine are the planets known as the *nava grahas* and of vital importance in Indian astrology. According to the Hindu system of astrology which dates from the 6th century if not earlier, the nine *grahas* are the Sun (Sūrya), moon (Candra), Mars (Maṅgala), Mercury (Budha), Jupiter (Bṛhaspati), Venus (Śukra), Saturn (Śani) and the ascending and descending nodes of the moon known as Rāhu and Ketu. Nine are the forms of Durgā *(navadurgā);* nine are the nights during which she is specially worshipped *(navarātri);* nine are the leaves used in her worship *(navapatrikā);* and nine are the auspicious precious gems *(navaratna).* Nine too are the Mātṛkās, listed in the *Matottara Tantra* as Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī, Vārahī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā, Caṇḍikā and Mahālakṣmī.

As already mentioned, Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsamhitā* states that a temple may also be based on a floor plan of 81 squares *(paramasayika maṇḍala),* a number that is the square of nine. Stella Kramrisch, in her *Hindu Temple,* points out that a study of subsequent literature on temple plans, especially of the *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati* (perhaps an 11th century work) indicates that a Maṇḍala of 81 squares as opposed to one of 64 squares is specially suitable for use by kings.[24] Kramrisch further


According to
Cakaranirūpaṇa
According to
Vidyārṇava Tantra
Saundaryalaharī,
Lalitā Sahasranāma etc
Sahasrāra
Yākinī (in seed, semen)
(between the eyebrows)
Ājñā cakra
Hākinī (in marrow in brain)
(throat)
Viśuddhi cakra
Ḍākinī (in the skin)
(heart)
Anāhata cakra
Rākinī (in blood)
Suṣumṇā
(navel)
Maṇipura cakra
Lākinī (in flesh)
Svādhiṣṭhāna cakra
Kākinī (in fat)
(base of spine)
Mūladhāra cakra
Sākinī (in bone).

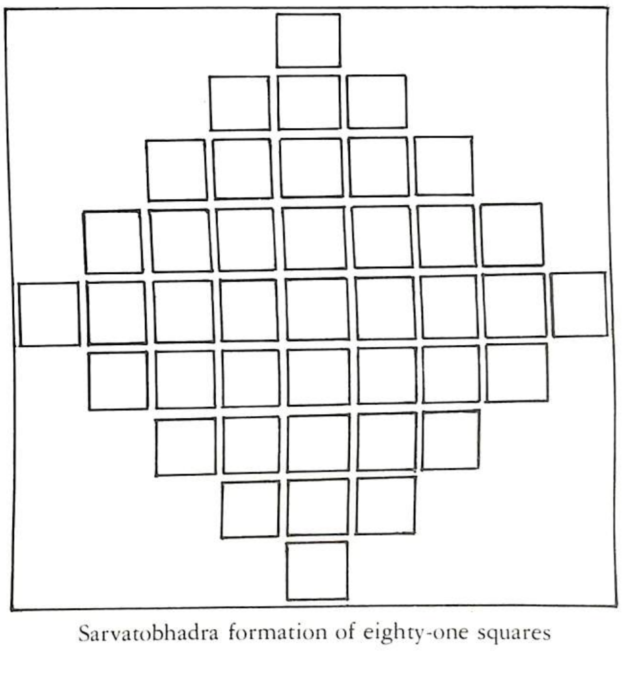
Yoginī Cakra and internal location of dieties


Viśvarūpā
Vikrāntā
Sarasvatī
Bhayā-
nanā
Vaiṣṇavī
Krodhanātha
Sarvajñā
Ṛgvedā
Revatī
Śāntā
North
Cittānandā
Ugrā
Svarūpinī
Vāyuvegā
Cāmuṇḍā
Bhīmanātha
Vāmā
Vikṛtānanā
Ramaṇī
Vāmanā
North-West
Phetkārī
Piśitāsavā
Śimhanādā
Caṇḍa-
nāyikā
Caṇḍikā
Meghanātha
Kāla-
hantrī
Pracaṇḍā
Kulā
Caṇḍā
North East
Krodhanāmā
Bhairavī
Bhayāvahā
Sinhā
Kaumārī
Candranātha
Hutāśanī
West
Vaḍavā-
mukhī
Vidālākṣī
Humkārī
Centre
Pūtanā
Revatī
Ulhakā
Mahālakṣmī
Samhāranātha
Yama-
jihvā
Jayantikā
Jayantī
Durjayā
Krisṇā
Cipitā
Kṛṣṇalālasā
East
Kṣayā
Brāhmī
Asitāṅga
Akṣobhyā
Kṣapā
Ṛkṣakaranī
Rākṣasī
South-West
Piṣṭāsavā
Piśācī
Lolupā
Pañcā-
nanā
Aindrī
Kapālīśa
Campā
Pralayantikā
Campāvatī
Pralayā
South-East
Kālakaraṇī
Pracaṇḍā
Rūpahā
Megha
nādā
Varāhī
Bhairava
Tāla-
janghā
Bhayankarī
Bṛhatkukṣī
Vidyutjihvā
South
Lālasā
Laṅkeśī
Vimalā
Laṅkā
Māheśī
Rurunāth
Helā
Luptā
Līlā
Guptā

Mūla Cakra of the eighty-one Yoginīs (according to the *Matottara Tantra*) notes that the *Mānasollasa,* which is a royal compendium, refers only to the plan of 81 squares.[25] It appears then that a Maṇḍala of 81 is to be used primarily for royal temple construction.

A unique system of eighty-one Yoginīs, known as the *Mūla Cakra* and revolving around the concept of nine Mātṛkās, is described in the *Matottara Tantra.*[26] Each Mātṛkās is herself considered to be a Yoginī and she collects around her eight other Yoginīs, forming a group of nine Yoginīs. It is thus that one arrives at the number 81 for the Mūla Cakra Yoginīs. Worship of the entire group of 81 Yoginīs in one circle will fulfil all the *sādhaka's* desires, bestow untold wealth as well as the eight magical *siddhis.* If the 81 Yoginīs are arranged in a single circle, the Mūla Cakra is to contain at its centre the *sarvatobhadra* formation, to construct which one has to start with nine rows of nine squares each. However, each group of nine Yoginīs may be worshipped independently. Brāhmī in the east is worshipped specially by those who desire a male heir, while Maheśī in the south confers the various magical powers, the eight *siddhis.* Kaumārī in the west is worshipped for destroying enemies and Vaiṣṇavī in the north confers the boon of a kingdom. Varāhī in the south-east is importuned for the success of an army and Aindrī in the south-west is in special command of securing territorial gain. Cāmuṇḍā in the north-west is adored in order that she banish all one's fears when attacked by enemy kings. Lakṣmī at the centre is worshipped by those who have lost their kingdom and wealth and are being oppressed by enemies.

A listing of the benefits that accrue from the worship of each of the nine independent group of nine Yoginīs, indicate that the Mūla Cakra system of *ekāśīti* or eighty-one Yoginīs is intended primarily for royalty. One may assume that a temple to the 81 Yoginīs would be constructed by royalty and that worship of the 81 Yoginīs would, on the whole, be restricted to the royal family and nobility. We have seen that a Maṇḍala of 81 for the floor plan of a temple, as opposed to one of 64, is specifically intended for royalty. The Mūla Cakra of eighty-one Yoginīs further reinforces the idea that 81 is specially important for royalty and indeed, the concordance between the two independent lines of enquiry is striking.


Sarvatobhadra formation of eighty-one squares

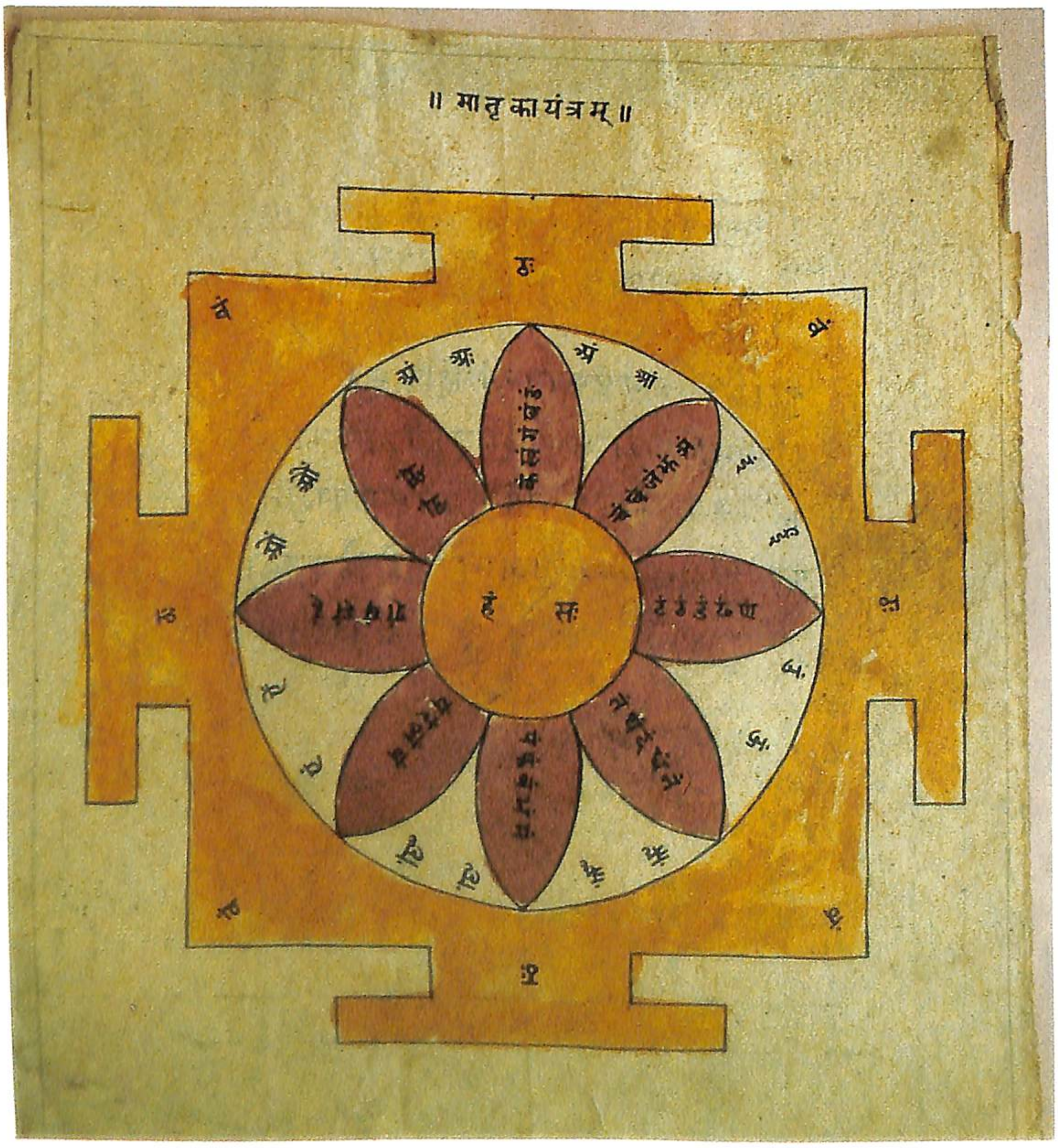
Bhūtalipi Cakra of Forty-two Yoginīs ?

The existence of a circular Yoginī temple with forty-two niches for the placement of 42 images leads us into a consideration of this numeral. While not as popular as the numbers 64 and 81, forty-two is also a known auspicious number. While the tantras are generally said to number 64, in certain schools of thought there are 42 tantras,[27] while the Śakti *pīṭhas* (sacred sites) too are sometimes regarded as 42 in number.[28]

The Bhūtalipi which is a specialized arrangement of forty-two of the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet,[29] is of special significance of *cakras* of Yoginīs. *Bhūta* is spirit or being, and *lipi* is letter, indicating that Bhūtalipi may be interpreted as Living Letters or perhaps as Beings of the Letters. This is not something unusual in the Indian context. The fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, known as *mātṛkās*, are personified and worshipped as deities, and several such *mātṛkā cakras* drawn on paper and cloth are known. In addition, the *Matottara Tantra* itself describes a Mālinī Cakra which is another specialized arrangement of Sanskrit letters, and it describes in detail the goddess personifying each Mālinī letters.[30] The *Matottara* tells us that these personified Mālinīs are to be worshipped within a Mālinī Cakra, either by setting up images in a circular formation or by drawing them on a *paṭa* or scroll. The tantra then specifies the various occult powers arising from continued and prolonged worship of the Mālinī Cakra.

The Bhūtalipi and its arrangement of 42 letters is discussed in the seventh chapter of the *Śāradātilaka Tantra* which refers to the *varṇeśvarīs* or goddesses of the letters, and tells us that the deities of the Bhūtalipi should be appropriately worshipped.[31] The clear indication is that the 42 letters of the Bhūtalipi have been personified into goddesses. On the analogy of the Mālinī Cakra, it seems feasible to suggest the existence of a Bhūtalipi Cakra, and the possibility that a temple with forty-two niches was built to house these personified letters. One may further hypothesize that the worshipper of such a Cakra might expect occult powers similar to those that accrue from worship of the Mālinī Cakra.

Mātṛakā (alphabet) *cakra* from Rajasthan



3. Occult Powers and Cult Practices

The aim of most religious cults, however thinly disguised it may be in the case of exotic sects, is to achieve some sort of communion with the Divine. With the Yoginī cult, however, it becomes apparent that the goal in the worship of circles of Yoginīs was to obtain a wide variety of occult powers. Whether implied or explicitly stated, this fact emerges unmistakeably from both tantric and Purāṇic texts that concern themselves with the Yoginīs. Salvation was not the aim, the word *mokṣa* finding no place in textual discussions on *cakras* of Yoginīs and the benefits accrueing from their propitiation. The term *mokṣa* in unknown, for instance, to the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* which deals extensively with the Yoginīs. The word *mukti* for deliverance occurs once or twice in this tantra, but the manner of its usage suggests that it is included as a matter of form. It is the acquisition of magical abilities that is set forth as the goal, with details being given of those that enable the *sādhaka* to control and influence others. Frequently it is the lesser variety of magical power that is the aim. For instance Devī, in the *Matottara,* addresses Śiva thus:

> My lord, impart to me the secret knowledge about *cakras* of Yoginīs
> the knowledge of which bestows the ability to fly in the air.[1]

Śiva concludes his exposition with the statement that knowledge of this *cakra* of Yoginīs will give the devotee the eight potent magical *siddhis.*

The theory of the *aṣṭamahāsiddhis,* the eight great miraculous or magical powers, is of considerable antiquity. It is included in Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* as a known concept and elaborated upon in the commentaries of Vyāsa (7th century) and Paramara king Bhoja (11th century).[2]

1. *Aṇimā* is the ability to become minute in size and to thus penetrate an atom or molecule and perceive its inner structure. This *siddhi* would give complete knowledge of the working of this world of ours.

2. *Mahimā* is the ability to become gigantic in size and be able to penetrate beyond our own solar system and universe and view reality.

3. *Laghimā* is weightlessness or the supernatural ability to assume lightness at will. Apart from levitation, this *siddhi* would include the power to leave one's body at will and travel in astral form.

Hirapur Yoginī (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

4. *Garimā* is excessive weightiness and the power that arise from this.

5. *Prākāmya* is an irresistable will that compels others to do one's wishes. This would include hypnotic powers and highlights mind-control and the power of thought.

6. *Īśitva* is control over body and mind, both one's own and that of others, and it implies mastery over all living creatures, be it man or mouse.

7. *Vaśitva* is control over the natural elements and would include the power to produce rain, to cause a drought or a flash flood, to induce a volcano, to erupt or an earthquake to occur.

8. *Kāmavaśayita* is the fulfillment of all one's desires, including the power to obtain anything whatsoever from a handful of ashes to all the treasures of the world. In its various chapters on circles of Yoginīs, the *Matottara Tantra* repeatedly states that the eight great *siddhis* are available to the devout worshipper of *cakras* of Yoginīs.

The *Matottara Tantra* also tells us of other powerful abilities which the Yoginīs, when appropriately invoked in their temples, confer on their devotees. These are mostly in the category of black magic and include *māraṇam* or the ability to cause death and *uccāṭanam* or making a man so thoroughly disillusioned with home and business that he abandons both. There is the power of *stambhanam* or paralysis and stupefaction and that of *jṛmbhaṇam* or causing unconsciousness. *Plāvanam* is the ability to cause a sudden flood, *drāvaṇam* is the power to cause a person to flee, and the relatively harmless *kṣobhaṇam* means the ability to cause excessive agitation, irritation and provocation to another. *Parapurapraveśa* is the entering of another's home, *kavittava manoharam* is the ability to produce enchanting poetry, and *vaśyākarṣaṇam* is the compelling and infatuating power to seduce another's wife. *Mohanam* is the magical ability to bewilder and delude an enemy, and *sphoṭanam-śaila-vṛksānām* is the power to rend asunder rocks and trees. Other occult powers include the ability to destroy the *cakras* that another has created and to thus nullify all possible ill-effects on oneself.[3] It is certainly a hazy grey margin that demarcates and separates left-handed Yoga powers of this variety from pure magic.

Fearsome Yoginī from Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

The *Skanda Purāṇa*, in a chapter titled "The Arrival of the Sixty-four Yoginīs", contains interesting information on the magical abilities conferred by the Yoginīs. The list of *siddhis* includes *vaśīkaraṇam* or the power of subjugation through attraction; *guṭikāñjana*, a type of collyrium applied to the eyes that enables one to locate buried treasure; *dhātuvāda* or alchemic powers; *vidagdha* or the power of destruction; *agnistambhanam*, the power to stop fire; *jalastambham*, the power to stop the waters; *vākstambham*, the power to render speechless; *khecaritvam*, the ability to fly in the air; *adṛśyatvam* or invisibility; *ākarṣaṇam*, the power of irresistable attraction; *uccāṭanam*, the power to drive a man away from his home; *nijāṅgasaundaryam*, to make beautiful one's own person, and *yuvacittavimohanam*, infatuating the youthful mind. When worshipped and meditated upon, the Yoginīs are said to become quickly pleased *(kṣipram prasanna yoginyaḥ)*. Just three evenings devoted to a repetition of their names will induce them to protect you from all external harmful influences, and they will protect your children and the unborn foetus.

> To him who worships in the Yoginī pīṭha (temple), they will give all the *siddhis;*
> Even he who utters other mantras, so long as he be in the Yoginī pīṭha, will be granted a part of the *siddhis.*

To royalty, the Yoginīs will give victory in disputes and great wealth, and the devout worshipper of these goddesses becomes the foremost among men *(narottamaḥ),* untroubled by any obstacles. This chapter of the *Skanda Purāṇa* refers frequently to the circle of Yoginīs *(yoginīcakra* and *yoginīvṛnda),* and it includes a list of names of the 64 Yoginīs.[4]

The *Kālikā Purāna,* in a chapter which speaks of the Yoginī *kavaca* or magical charm and of the Yoginī *mata* or doctrine, lists a set of *siddhis* which differ slightly from those so far encountered. Apart from *guṭikāñjana* and *uccāṭana,* which are part of the *Skanda Purāṇa* list, the *Kālikā* mentions *pādalepa,* an ointment applied to the soles of one's feet that enables one to move anywhere one wishes, and *rasāyana* or the elixir of immortality.[5] It has been pointed out that these four powers belong in fact to a Buddhist tradition of eight *siddhis* that includes *khaḍga,* a magical sword ensuring victory in battle; *antardhāna* or invisibility; *khecara* and *bhūcara,* the ability to move swiftly in the sky and on earth.[6]

The *siddhis* listed in the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* include the ability to see from a great distance, to possess remarkable speed, to be loved by one and all, to enter another's body and to have control over decay and death. Interesting is the ability described as *yoginīmelakam* or association (perhaps union or copulation) with the Yoginīs themselves.[7]

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* mentions the fact that worship of the Yoginīs gives the devotee various *siddhis,* but it does not elaborate upon these.[8] It does, however, tell us that worship of the *cakra* of Yoginīs confers *doṣa śānti* or expiation from sins, as also freedom from disease and from misfortnes of all kinds.[9] The *Kulārṇava* reiterates this is another verse:

> "Those who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances;
> Diseased, poverty-stricken, beset with quarrels, filled with fears;
> They are those who have angered the Yoginīs and fallen from their grace."[10]

In connection with freedom from disease, it is interesting to note that the Jain saint Munisundarasuri (1380-1447) composed a *māntric* hymn titled *Śāntikarma* or "Peace-Inducer", specially to ward off an epidemic at Delwada in Gujarat that was believed to have been caused by the displeasure of the 64 Yoginīs.[11] The popular belief that the Yoginīs could cure even love-sickness is contained in an amusing story in the *Ākhyānakamaṇikośa,* written by the Jain saint Nemicandrasuri between 1073-1080. When king Nanda was beset by this incurable malady (:) and refused to take an interst in matters of state, one of the important remedies suggested was the worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs in the Yoginī temple.[12]

Hirapur Yoginī standing on recumbent male (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

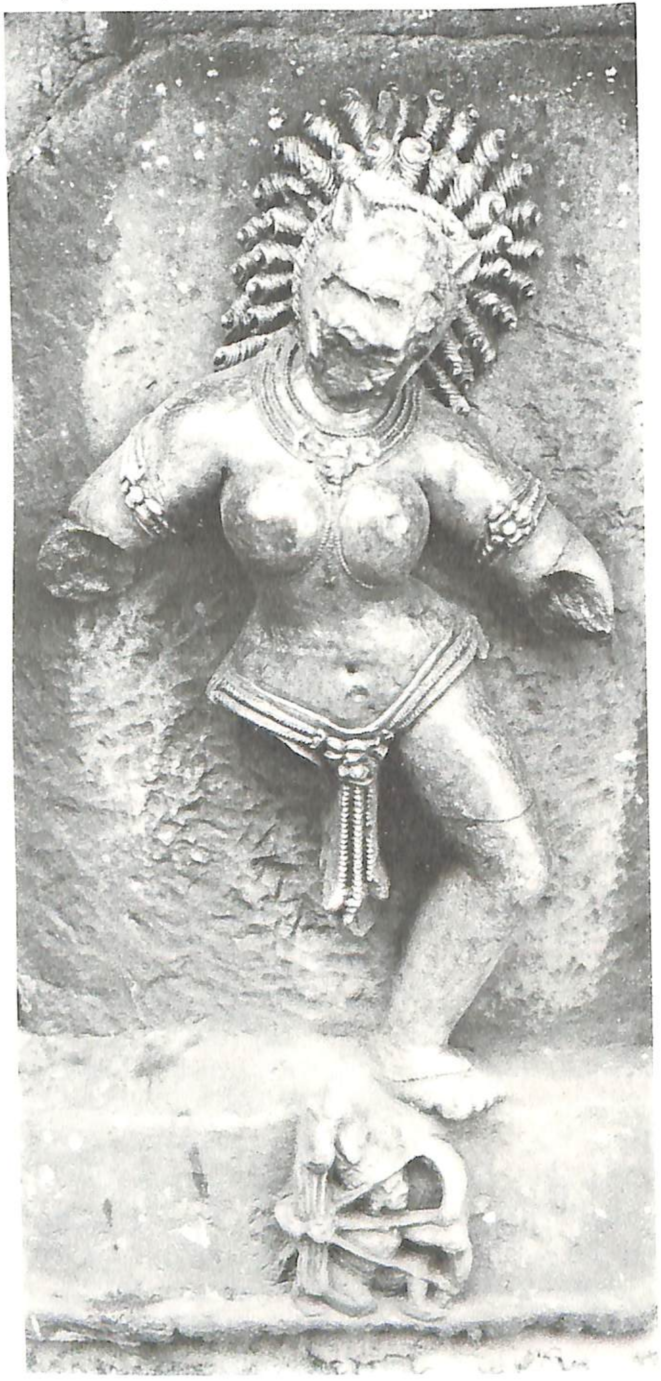
We have seen the special importance of royal worship of the group of eighty-one Yoginīs, clearly stated in the *Matottara Tantra's* section on the *Mūla Cakra,* inwhich such worship is said to guarantee success in all military enterprises.[13] However, the *Kulārṇava Tantra* indicates that royal worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs too was of significance, and Śiva expounds thus:

> "If a king but worships the sixty-four Yoginīs with total devotion, O Devī;
> His fame will reach the shores of the four oceans; of that there is no doubt."[14]

Texts on *Yoginī Sādhanā* specify that the Yoginī worshipped as wife will make a man the foremost among kings *(rājendraḥ sarvarājānām)*[15] and we have seen that the *Skanda Purāṇa* promises the royal worshipper of the Yoginīs great wealth and victory *(jayam)* in disputes.

The impotance of the various *siddhis* and the prominence given to such magical powers is seen from several texts that are devoted entirely to this subject. One such is the *Uḍḍīśa Tantra*[16] in which Śiva, in successive chapters, gives instructions and *mantras* for *māraṇam* (death, the killing of an enemy, chapters 1 and 2); *mohanam* (bewildering, deluding the enemy, chapter 3); *stambhanam* (paralysis, stoppage of fire, mind, army etc., chapter 4); *vidveṣaṇam* (causing enmity, chapter 5); *uccāṭanam* (causing a man to flee, chapter 6); *vaśīkaraṇam* (subjugation of king, women, chapter 7); and *ākarṣaṇam* (attraction, chapter 8). The 9th chapter of this *Uḍḍīśa Tantra* is devoted to the worship of the Yakṣiṇī and to *śava-śmaśāna-sādhanā,* or corpse the cemetery ritual, and it incorporates *mantras* for bringing the dead back to life. The 10th and last chapter contains *mantras* for warding off evil of all types. The belief that magical abilities accrue from various exotic types of worship, resulted in a wide range of tantric works devoted solely to magic. Among these to name a few, are the *Dattātreya Tantra* (which also contains a chapter on Yakṣiṇī worship), the *Āścarya-yogamālā* and the *Manthānabhairava Tantra* which is closely with the *Śrī Matottara Tantra.*[17]

Awesome Yoginī from Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



Mahāyāga: Ritual of Yoginī Worship

The pursuit of the occult powers bestowed by the Yoginīs on those they favoured was achieved through a series of rites and practices known collectively as Mahāyāga. In using this term to describe the rituals of the Yoginī cult, I am following Bhaskararaya who, in his commentary on the *Lalitā Sahasranāma,* explains Mahāyāga as the way of worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs, adding that Mahāyāga gives quicker results than other methods of worship.[18] The circular walls of the Yoginī temple formed an enclosed and sacred space within which were enacted the rites of Mahāyāga, in order to appease and placate the Yoginīs who could be cruel and wrathful if displeased with a devotee, but who would grant him all manner of powers if appropriately adored. The use of a circle is, of course, an age-old practice of all magic and witchcraft: it helps define the sacred space within which magic power can rise to a peak.

Wine, Flesh and Blood

Invocation of the Yoginīs clearly involved oblations of wine which was a popular and frequent offering associated with the exaltation of the Great Goddess herself. A manuscript entitled *Mahākālī-ṣodaśa-pātra,*[19] a collection of verses in praise of sixteen vessels filled with wine to be offered to Mahākālī, clearly indicates the importance of wine in Devī worship; while the *Devī Māhātmyam* tells how Caṇḍikā drinks several cups of wine during her final battle with Mahiṣāsura. The Yoginīs too were inordinately fond of liquor. The *Matottara Tantra* describes the Yoginīs variously as swaying with the effect of wine *(madirānanda-ghūrṇitā),* as delighting in the pleasure of wine *(madirānanda-lālasā)* and *madirānanda-nanditā),* and as having eyes rolling thourgh the intoxicating of wine *(mada-ghūrṇita-locanā).*[20] The *Kulārṇava Tantra* gives us an intriguing recipe for the favourite drink of the Yoginīs *(yoginīpānamuttamam).* One part of dry ginger, two parts of lemon tree bark, three parts of black peppercorns, four parts of *dhātakī* (?), five of blossoms, six of honey and eighty parts of jaggery (unrefined brown sugar) are to be mixed together with water twice the quantity of honey. Twelve days of brewing produces this enchanting liquor *(idam manoharam dravyam).*[21] The names of some of the Yoginīs suggesting their partiality to wine include Surāpriyā (Lover of wine) and Piśitāsavalolupā (She who is greedy for pressed wine).

The Yoginīs were also fond of drinking blood while eating the flesh of animals. The *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* describes the Yoginīs as dancing while drinking blood and wine,[22] and the *Kaulāvalī Nirṇaya* specifies the importance of blood and meat *(rudhira* and *māṁsa)* in the worship of the Yoginīs and Bhairavas.[23] Names of the Yoginīs indicating their fondness for these offerings include Rudhirapāyinī (Drinker of blood) and Māṁsapriyā (Lover of meat). We are told that food offerings to the Yoginīs should be placed towards the north, and the *Kulārṇava* even specifies the particular hand gesture *(mudrā)* to be used when offering such *bali.*[24]

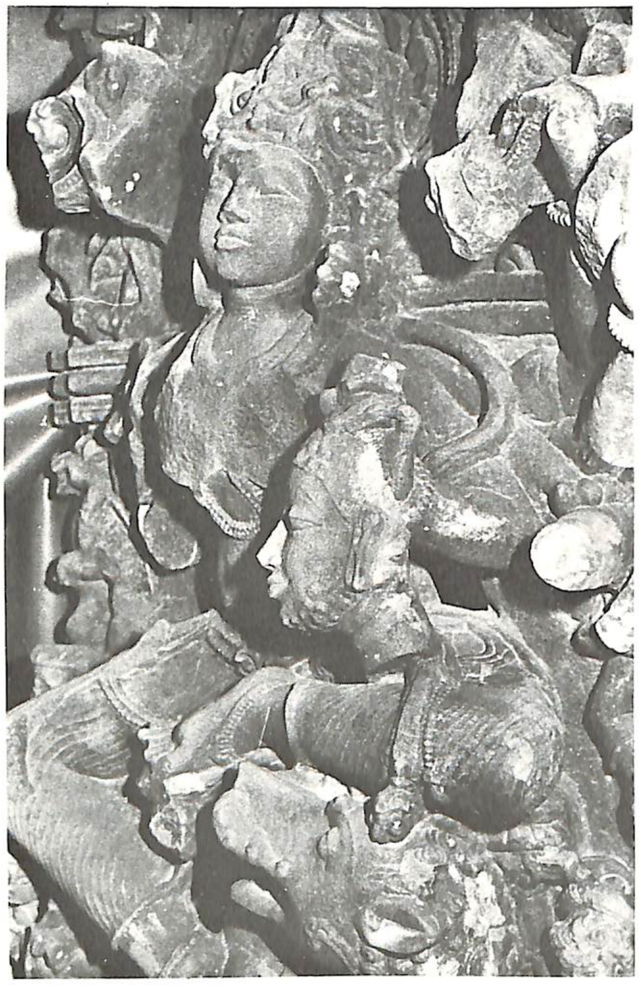
The importance of blood and flesh in the worship of the Great Goddess dates back to early times. The *Devī Māhātmya* tells of Kālī drinking the blood of the demon Raktabīja, of Cāmuṇḍā and Nārasimhī consuming the demons and of the Mātṛkās dancing at their victory, intoxicated with blood. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* contains a chapter entitled *Rudhirādhyāya* or "Blood Chapter" which informs us that blood from one's own body may be offered to Devī.[25] Oblations of flesh and blood of animals are to this day associated with the tantric propitiation of the Great Goddess. At the Kāmākhyā temple where the sixty-four Yoginīs are also invoked, animal sacrifice is a regular part of the daily worship. One goat is sacrificed each morning by the temple authorities in a pavilion that is set aside for this purpose, with the head being neatly cut off and the blood caught in an earthen pot. This pot of blood and the severed head are taken down into the shrine for ritual offering to the Goddess, while the rest of the goat is cooked and distributed to pilgrims and worhippers. Devotees too bring goats as offerings and frequently as many as twenty goats are sacrificed in a day, while during the days of the Durgā festival, buffaloes are offered instead.

Hirapur Yoginī (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

It is interesting to note that only male animals may be sacrificed to Devī.

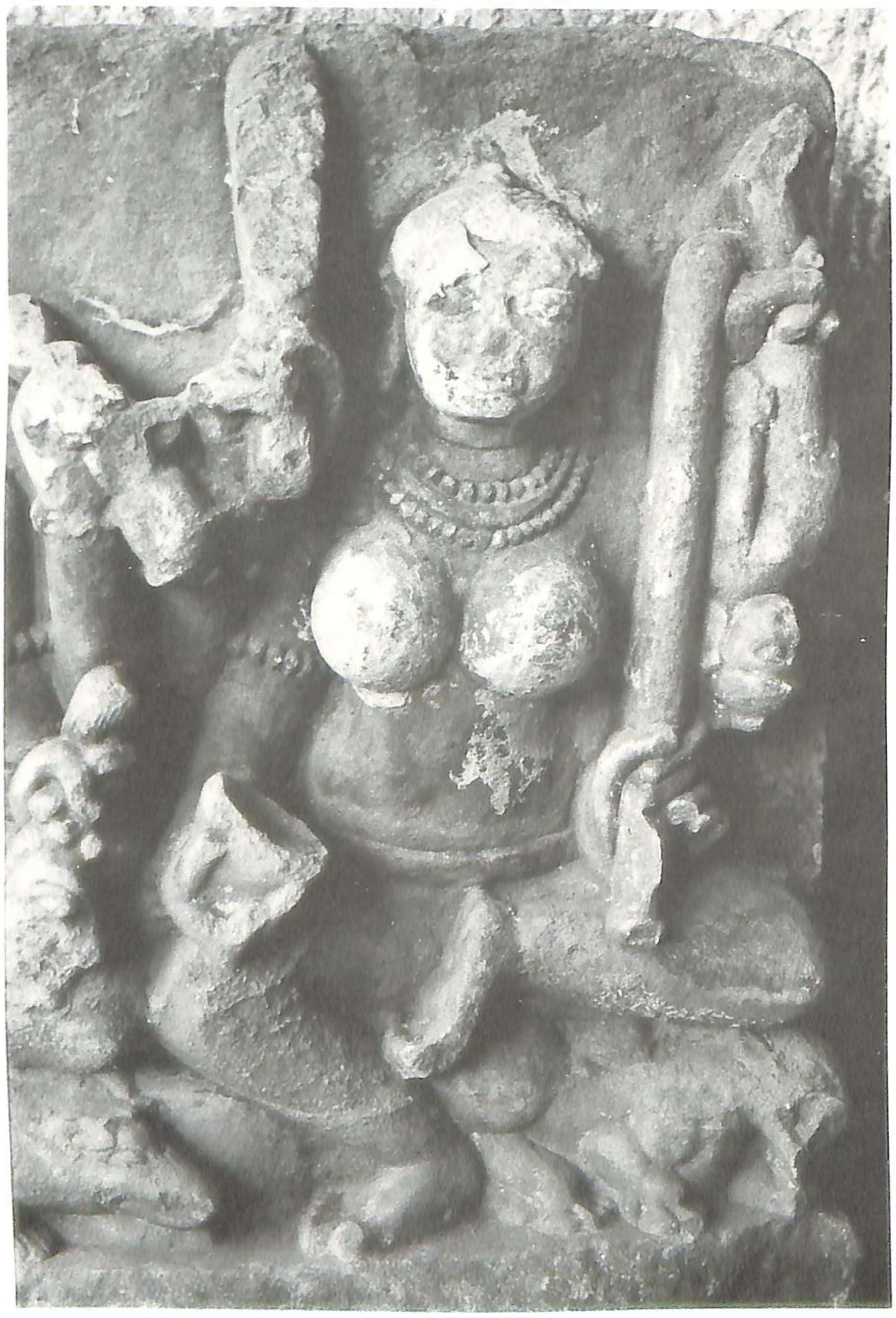
Śava-sādhanā or Corpse Ritual

A scrutiny of the figures carved along the pedestals of the Yoginī images in certain temples reveals the association of the Yoginīs with corpses, severed human heads, skull-cups and curved *kartarī* knives. This type of gory association is seen particularly on the images from Sahdol, Bheraghat, Ranipur-Jharial and Rikhiyan, but is not absent at other sites. Śrī Bhānavī (Lustrous One) from Shahdol herself holds a severed human head in one hand; she is surrounded by attendants holding a severed head by its hair or swinging it casually with one hand while brandishing a knife with the other; and one female actually gnaws at a detached human hand. A similar macabre association is suggested in the *Vārāhī Tantra*



Śrī-Bhānavī from Shahdol, holding severed human head, (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

Yoginī from Rikhiyan holding human corpse by its legs



which speaks of the extraordinary group of Yoginīs *(vicitrayoginīgaṇa)*, established among headless bodies and severed heads *(ruṇḍa-muṇḍoparisthite)*.[26] Is all this an indication of human sacrifice, or is it instead a pointer to *śava-sādhanā* or corpse ritual?

It is necessary to make a distinction between human sacrifice which involves the ritual killing of a human being as an offering to the deity, and *śava-sādhanā* rites which start with an already dead human being, a *śava* or corpse. Despite the fact that Yoginīs have names such as Narabhojinī (Eater of men), Muṇḍadhāriṇī (She who holds a severed head) and Śava-hastā (She with a corpse in her hand), it would appear that actual sacrifice of humans was not part of the Yoginī cult. Propitiation of the Yoginīs seems rather to have included the rituals connected with corpses, and tantric works dealing with such *śava-sādhanā,* including the *Kaulāvalī Nirṇaya*[27] specifically mention the necessity of making offerings to the sixty-four Yoginīs while conducting these macabre and esoteric rites.

Śava-sādhanā is a known facet of tantric ritual and is described in several tantric texts. The *Vīra Tantra,* giving details of *śava-sādhanā* that is to be performed in the *śmaśāna* or burning grounds, states clearly that in the course of corpse rites, libations of wine and oblations of food are to be offered to the 64 Yoginīs.[28] The *sādhaka* is told to practice *prāṇāyāma,* the ritual breathing of Yoga, seated upon a corpse: Another tantric text the *Vīra Cūḍāmaṇi,* also mentions the necessity of making offerings to the Yoginīs in the course of the rites. This text gives us a further ritual associated with corpse rites when it informs us that the *sādhaka* and his female partner, both *vivastra* or unclothed, are to sit upon the corpse and there perform the rite of *maithuna* or copulation.[29]

Attendants of Śrī Bhānavī, holding served human heads

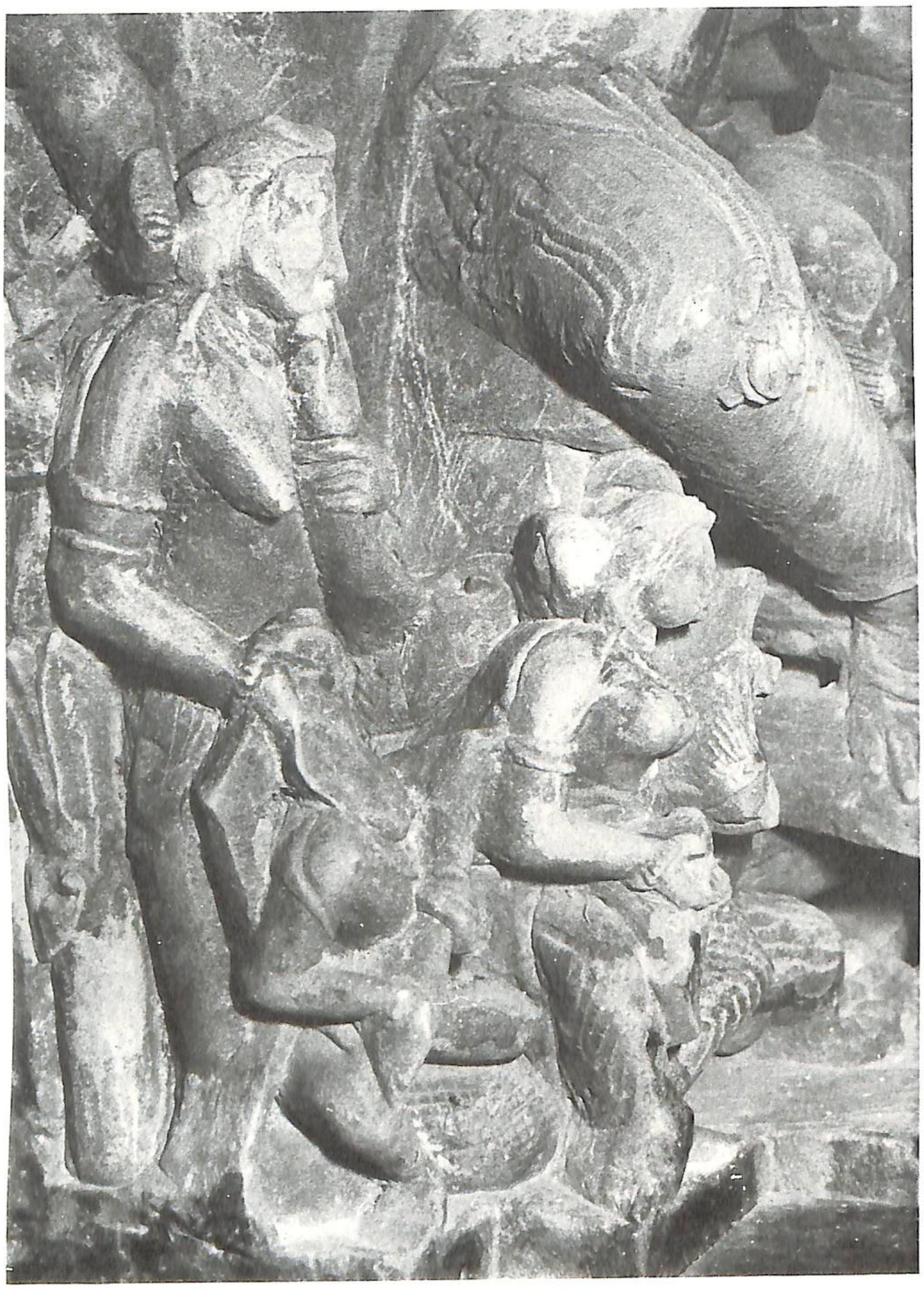
The *Śrī Matotara Tantra* which is so vitally connected with Yoginīs, gives us details of *śava-sādhanā* which is to be performed in front of Bhairava, at the centre of the Mothers *(matṛ-madhyagam)*.[30] It specifies:

> "The corpse must be a beautiful one, not injured in any way, and not defaced or marked in any manner. All its limbs must be intact and it should be a recent body that is still sweet-smelling. It should have all 32 teeth, all the auspicious signs, and it should be perfect in every way."

These instructions clearly indicate that a carefuly selected corpse, a dead body was to be used: human sacrifice is not indicated.

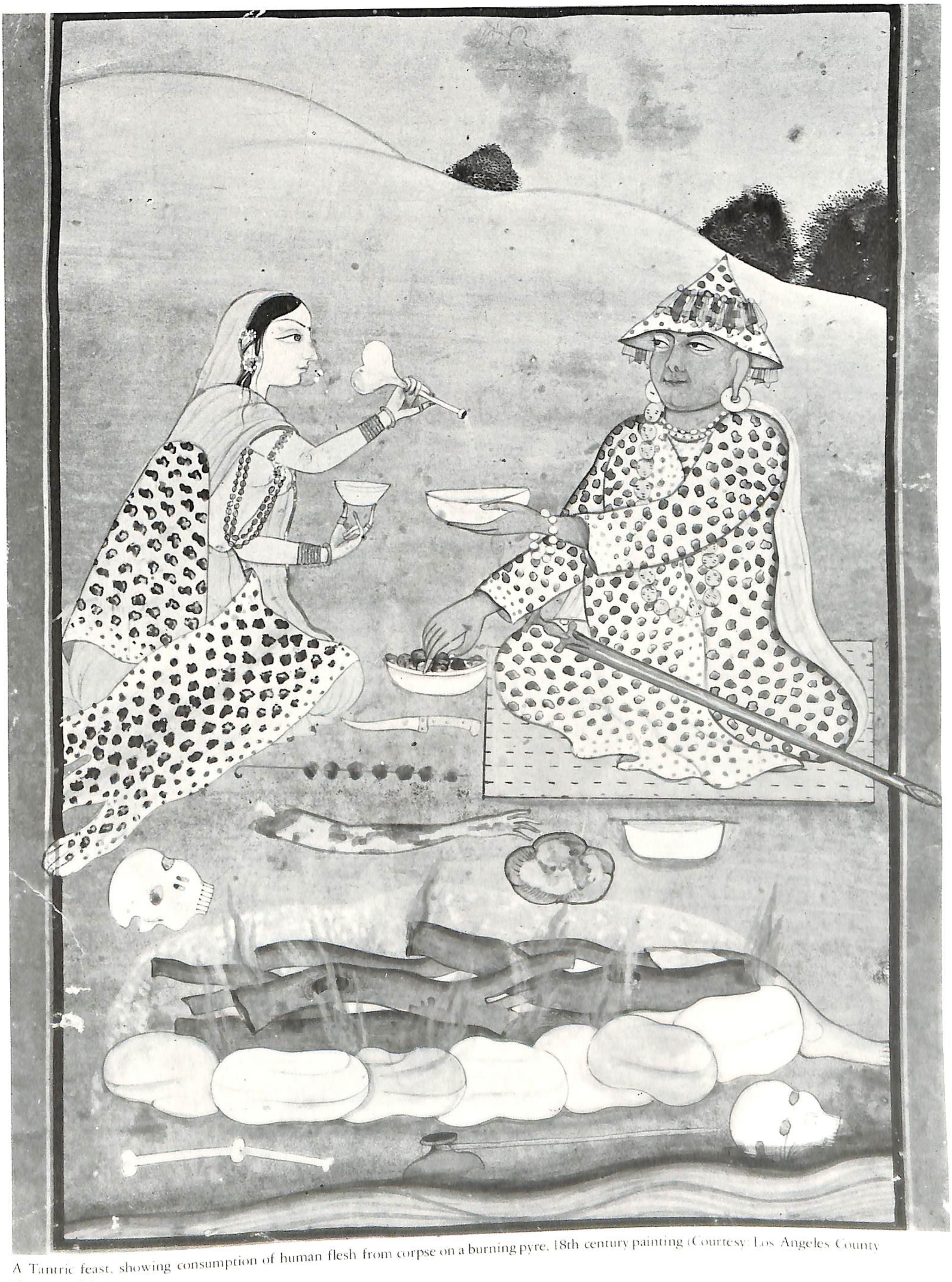
> "Bathe the corpse to the accompanimett of *mantras* and smear it with Kashmir sandalwood paste. Then, establish the *śava* in the centre of the *maṇḍala* and recite the Bhairava *mantra.* All this must be done in the middle of the night. O *sādhaka* performing this rite, be strong-minded, courageous and free from all doubts. Hold the head of the corpse and, with enthusiasm and disregarding the protruding tongue, cut off the head in one single stroke so that it falls to the ground."

It is this type of severed head that seems to be associated with Yoginī ritual. The *Matottara* concludes with the statement that the Mothers watch all this from the sky, and that the best of *sādhakas* will obtain the eight magical *siddhis* by the performance of this rite.



Attendants of Śrī Bhānavī, consuming human hand

The depiction of the consumption of a detached human hand or leg that is seen among the attendants and worshippers carved on the pedestal of some Yoginī slabs, must indicate a further facet of *śava-sādhanā.* A painting of a tantric feast, portraying a burning pyre with a half-burnt corpse from which human flesh is being consumed, certainly indicates that eating flesh off a corpse was part of the esoteric rites. It would be wrong to assume that *śava-sādhanā* is only described in tantric texts and the performance of the rite is a mere thing of the past. It continues to be enacted to this day in certain tantric centres, specially Kāmākhyā. Quite naturally, not many of us would come across the practice since one is scarcely likely to find oneself within the burning grounds at the midnight hour.[31] However, the practice is not uncommon and even today, when there is a death in a poor home, the family is approached with an offer of money or the use of the corpse for one night. Indeed, in the town of Kāmākhyā, people rarely leave a corpse uncremated overnight for fear of losing it to tantric practitioners.



A Tantric feast, showing consumption of human flesh from corpse on a burning pyre, 18th century painting (Courtesy: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Maithuna

Despite the fact that there are no sculptural depictions of ritual copulation in any Yoginī temple, and no such scenes carved among the figures clustered around the pedestal of any Yoginī image, it appears fairly certain that *maithuna* formed part of the Mahāyāga rites. The erotic content of Yoginī worship is indicated in two verses of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* which speak of the eight and the sixty-four *mithunas* (embracing couples), and suggests that the 64 Yoginīs were to be depicted in embrace with the 64 Bhairavas and worshipped thus.[32] The first verse speaks of the basic eight Mātṛkās of the Brāhmī series *(mūlāṣṭaka),* in embrace with the Asitāṅga group of eight Bhairavas, as comprising the eight *mithunas.* The prevalence of this concept of the eight *mithunas* is emphasized in the *Jñānārṇava Tantra* which clearly pairs *(yugma yugma)* the eight Mātṛkās and Bhairavas.[33] The second *Kulārṇava* verse states that Aksobhya and the others (who comprise a known series of 64 Yoginīs, discussed in Appendix II) are to be worshipped as a series of 64 *mithunas*. It would apear that the 64 Yoginīs, couples with the 64 Bhairavas, were indeed depicted as *mithunas,* probably in painted Maṇḍalas which have not survived. Certainly the importance of the use of Maṇḍalas and Yantras is emphasized in the tantric texts including the *Kulārṇava* which, as we have seen, states that worship performed without such diagrams is fruitless and does not please the deity.

The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* story of Sandhimat which also indicates that the Yoginīs themselves were involved in *maithuna,* is relevant here. It will be remembered that the circle of Yoginīs *(yoginīcakra)* brought the dead Sandhimat back to life because they felt an increasing and urgent desire for a virile lover. Having resurrected Sandhimat, they are said to have indulged with him in the pleasures of love, and then vanished. If the Yoginīs themselves were visualized as copulating and as filled with sexual desire, it would be only natural to expect the *sādhakas* of the Yoginī cult to indulge in *maithuna*. We have seen that the Yoginīs were the special patron goddesses of followers of the Kaula path for whom the five "m"s culminating in *maithuna* were essential rites. It stands to reason that the Yoginī Kaula cult too placed emphasis on such ritual copulation. It seems probable that the Kaula Cakra was formed within the circle of the Yoginī temple, with offerings to the Yoginīs of *matsya, māṁsa, mudrā, madya* and finally of *maithuna* too.

We have seen earlier that the Kaula Cakra, also known as the Yoginī or Bhairavī Cakra, is formed by human couples positioning themselves in a circular formation, thus demarcating a Cakra within which are enacted the Kaula rites that culminate in ritual sexual union. The exact number of persons forming such a Cakra varies, with the *Meru Tantra* insisting on a minimum of eight persons or four couples.[34] In specifying that the number of men and women must be equal, it reinforces the fact of impersonal pairing in which man and woman are not previously known to each other and do not come into the Cakra as a couple. Presumably it is this random pairing, as opposed to the choosing of an attractive and pleasing partner, that accounts for the great emphasis laid on sexual preliminaries in all Kaula texts. Such rites include the anointing of

Yoginī from Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India) the body as well as touching its various parts in a methodical manner, thus recognizing the need for stimulation of both partners.

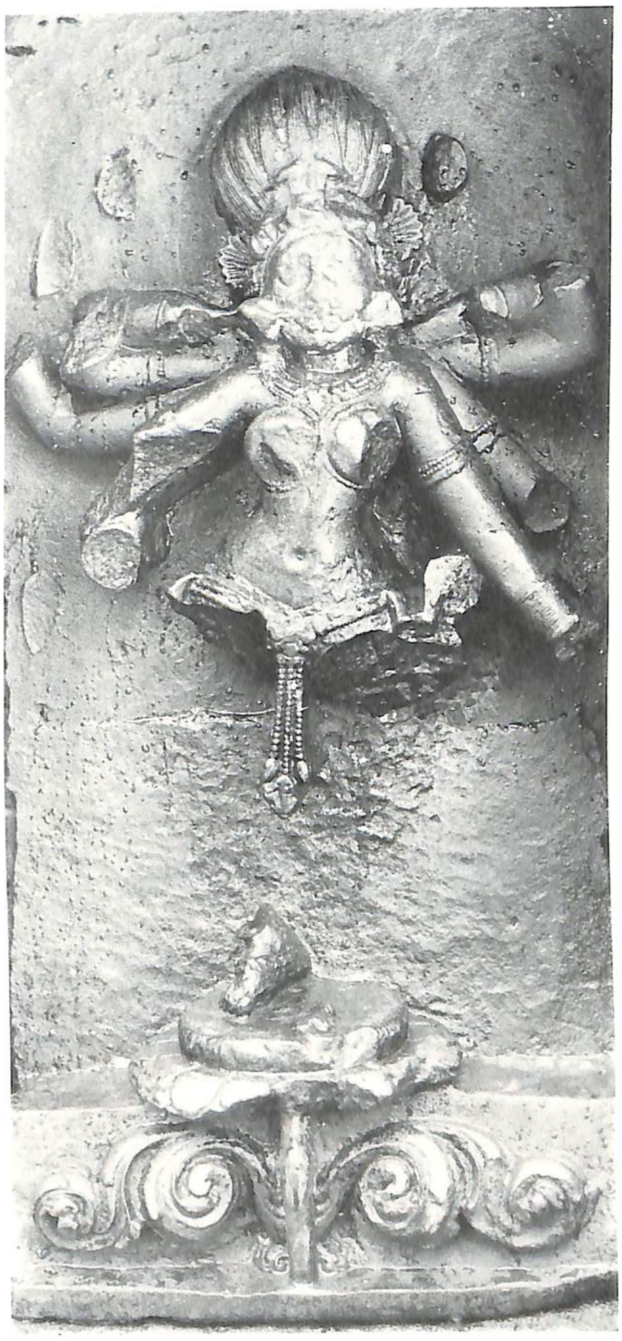
Texts on such *cakra-pūjā* repeat that there are no distinctions of caste when a Cakra is formed, but when it is dissolved, each participant reverts to his or her own caste. It is repeatedly stated that for the duration of the formation of the Cakra, all men in the circle are considered as Śiva and all women as Devī.[35] Followers of the Kaula path considered women of the lowest caste as those most suited to act as partners in *maithuna.* According to the *Cakra Nirūpaṇam,* the five most suitable types of women are a *rajakī* (washerwoman), a *carmakārī* (leather-worker), a *veśyā* (prostitute), the *mātaṅgī* (an outcaste) and the *madhumatī* (perhaps of the vintners caste).[36]

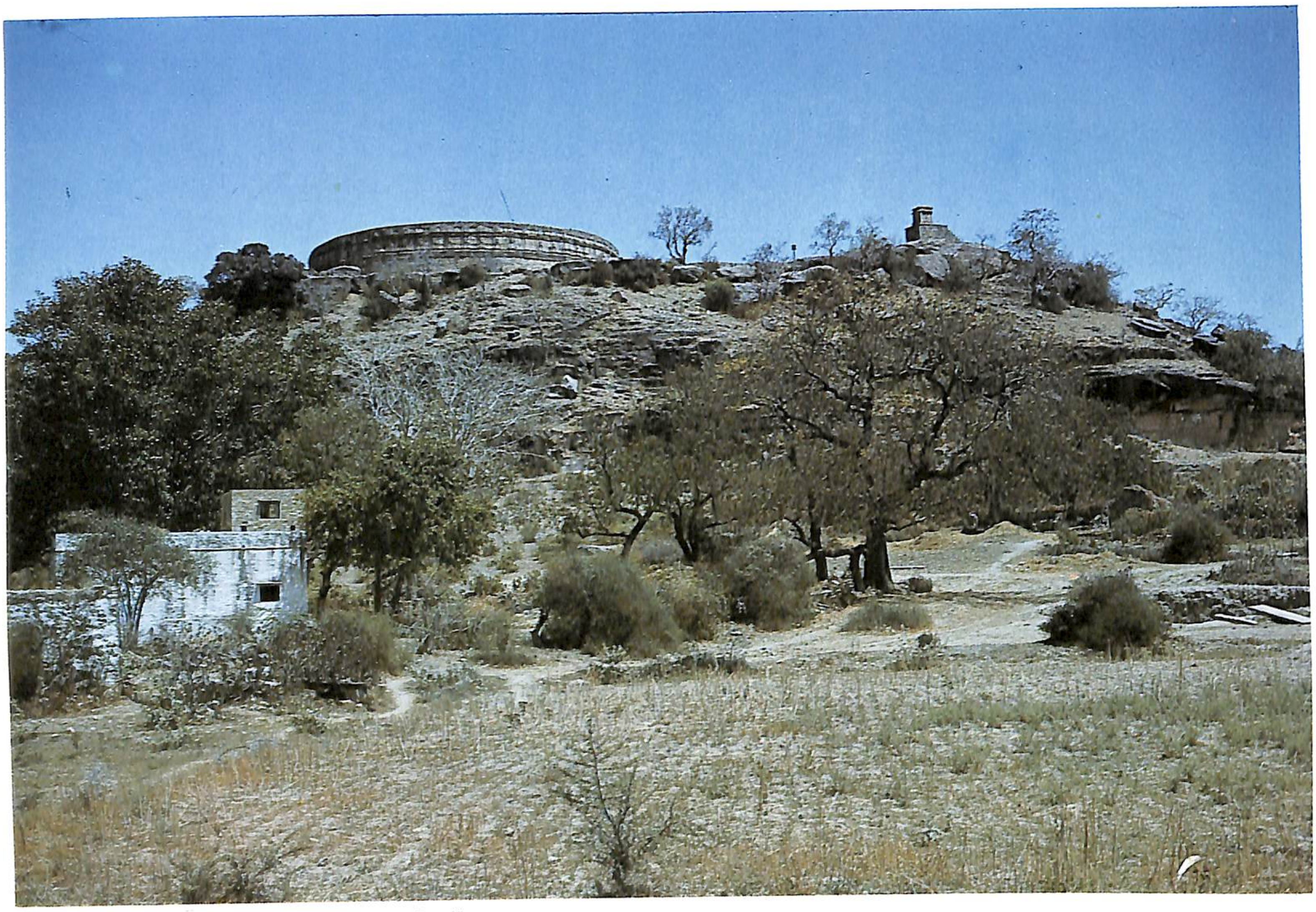
Tantrics of the Kaula path place great emphasis on the human body as the medium through which liberation is achieved. It is to be kept in perfect physical condition through the practice of Yoga in order to realise to the full the sexual rite of *maithuna* which leads to final liberation. The entire *maithuna* ritual is also conceived of in connection with the Devī Kuṇḍalinī and the internal Cakras of the subtle body. We saw that Kuṇḍalinī resides in dormant form in the Mūlādhāra Cakra located at the base of the spine. Her arousal is equated with the awakening of sexual desire, and the upward movement of Devī Kuṇḍalinī through the various Cakras implies the levels of intensification of the sexual experience. When Kuṇḍalinī reaches the highest Cakra, the Sahasrāra, the final fulfilment is reached.

The Kaula Cakra ritual is practised to this day by tantrics in various parts of the country. At Kāmākhyā, a *yoginīcakra-pūjā* is performed on several auspicious days such as the vernal equinox, with Yogīs and Yoginīs sitting paired in a circle to perform this ritual. The followers of such rites are known in Kāmākhyā as *adhikārīs* (male) and *bhairavīs* (female). The *bhairavīs* do not live with any one *adhikārī* on a permanent basis, but may be called upon as occasion dictates.[37] It is not only in specially important tantric centres that such *cakra-pūjā* is performed,[38] for, as the *Meru Tantra*[39] tells us, it is a fundamental requisite for joy in this life and for rebirth as a god.

Maithuna is one of the essential elements of Kaula ritual, forming the central theme of the Yoginī Cakra rites. It could also, if so desired, be part of *śava-sādhanā* which is one of the rites of the cult of the Yoginīs. While the cumulative evidence suggests that ritual *maithuna* was enacted within the circular enclosure of the Yoginī temples, it is strange that Yoginī texts should be silent about it, and the temples carry no sculptural representation of the subject. Perhaps the standing skeletal males on the pedestals of certain Yoginīs at Bheraghat, shown in a heightened state of sexual excitement, are intended to be seen as an indication of the ritual of *maithuna.*

Yoginī temples are located some distance away from the towns and often on top of an isolated hill. The reason for such a location obviously lay in the nature of the Mahāyāga rites enacted within


Hirapur Yogini (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



Yoginī temple on top of hill at Mitauli, near Gwalior

these temples. To acquire a variety of occult powers, it was necessary to propitiate the sixty-four Yoginīs by repetition of *mantras,* generous libations of wine, ritual oblations of flesh and blood of animals, and offerings of *ruṇḍas* (headless bodies) and *muṇḍas* (human heads). Severed human heads and skull-cups filled with blood could scarcely be offered in the heart of a town where it would cause revulsion and perhaps invite local wrath. Offerings of meat, involving the ritual killing of animals, and the imbibing of wine, would not have met with any great approval inside the towns, with orthodox Brahmanical thinking favouring vegetarianism and objecting to alcohol. When *maithuna* is added to the ritual practices of the Yoginī cult, it hardly needs emphasis that a high degree of privacy and secrecy was essential.

Yoginī Temples and Images

4. Origins And Spread of The Yoginī Cult

Origins And Antiquity

Exactly when the cult of the Yoginīs emerged in its full-fledged form is difficult to determine. Although stray references to Yoginīs may be found in earlier works, both archaeology and textual evidence point to the emergence of the Yoginī cult around the ninth centry. Of course, the cult of the Mothers (Mātṛkās) and tantric modes of worship with which the Yoginīs are closely associated, were known from much earlier times. Terracotta votive shrines of the Mothers of the Kushana period (1st to 3rd centry A.D.) have been found in Mathura and they have been mentioned in still earlier texts. The concept of female deities with bird and animal heads seems to have been prevalent from an early date. A broken stone panel in the Mathura Museum, belonging to the 2nd century A.D., depicts a set of five goddesses with such heads; each has a child on her knee indicating that they are mother goddesses.[1] The worship of the Mothers, involving tantric practices, is vividly described in the following verse of the Gangdhar inscription dated to A.D. 423:

> "Also for the sake of religious merit, the counsellor of the king caused to be built this very terrible abode... and filled with female ghouls (*ḍākinīs*) of the divine mothers *(matṛ)* who utter loud and tremendous shouts in joy, who stir up the oceans with the mighty wind rising from the magic rites of their religion (tantra)."[2]

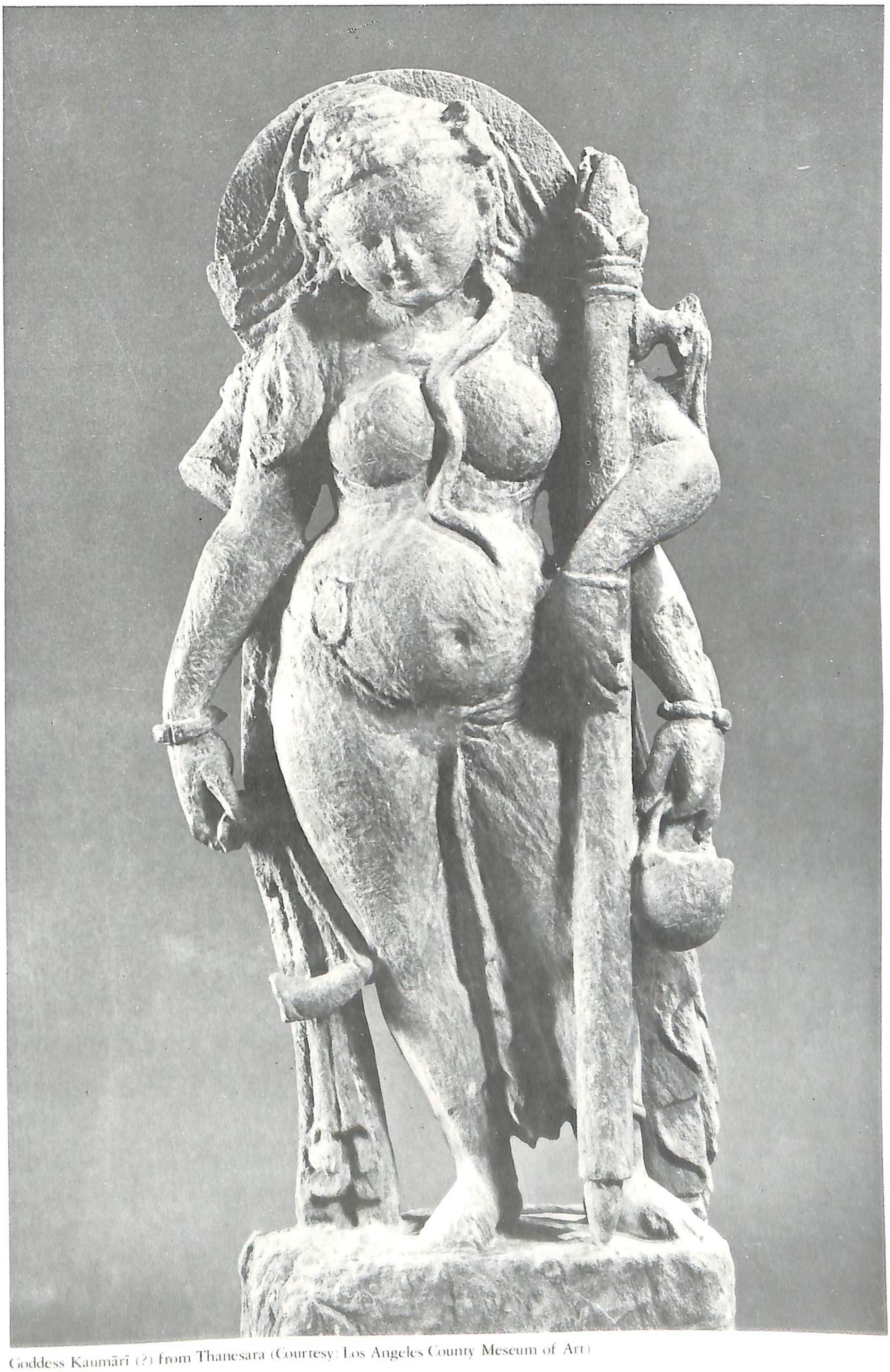
Interestingly, Gangdhar lies within the belt of existing Yoginī temples.

Fascinating information about the multiplicity of Mothers and their derivation is contained in the *Mahābhārata,* compiled sometime between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D. The *Śalya Parva* relates the story of Skanda being joined in his exploits by a group of Mothers *(mātṛgaṇa)* of whom nearly two hundred are named.[3] The Mothers are described as beautiful, youthful women and yet they have sharp teeth and nails and protruding lips. Some are emaciated and have sagging breasts. Others are round-bellied and yet others have long ears. These Mātṛkās wear garments of assorted hues and garlands of different types and they can assume any form they desire. We are told that they originate from the gods Yama, Rudra, Soma (Candra), Kubera, Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Kumāra (Skanda) and Brahmā. In form they are said to be like the *apsarās,* those beautiful celestial maidens; in speed like Vāyu, god of wind; in their lustre like Agni, god of fire; in strength like Indra. The Mātṛkās dwell in the trees, in open spaces, at the meeting of crossroads, in caves, in the cemetery, on mountains and at waterfalls. They are described as having melodious voices and as speaking different languages, indicating their varied tribal origin and pointing to the possible derivation of groupings of goddesses such as the Yoginīs from a variety of tribal and village deities.

Reference to early temples of the Mothers are contained also in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. Kalhaṇa records that Īśānadevī, wife of king Jalauka, built *mātṛcakras,* circles of Mothers, at a number of places in his empire.[4] Jalauka was believed to be a grandson of emperor Aśoka Maurya, and this would seem to indicate that as early as the 3rd century B.C., circular temples of the Mātṛkās were in existence. Unfortunately, however, we cannot treat this as a historical fact since Kalhaṇa, writing in the 11th century A.D., based much of his early history on legend and heresay in the absence of clear historical documentation. At any rate, Kalhaṇa believed that temples of the Mothers had been in existence for a thousand years. We do not know the exact date of the *Mahābhārata* passage, but considering the antiquity of the Mother Goddess cult in India, there would be nothing extraordinary about the existence of *mātṛcakras* in the 3rd century B.C.

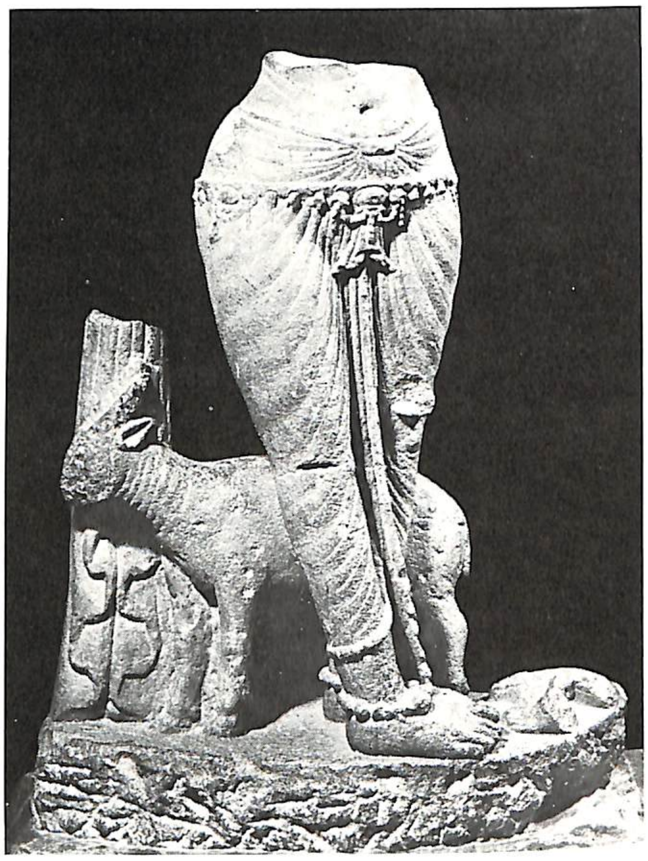
The dramatist Bhāsa, writing his *Cārudatta* in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., refers to ritual offerings of food that were made to the Mātṛkās at the coossroads.[5] The playwright Śūdraka, whose *Mṛcchakaṭika* is based on *Bhāsa's Cārudatta,* repeats the observance of this custom,[6] implying that shrines of the Mothers were frequently built at the crossroads. We have seen that the *Mahābhārata* mentions the crossroads as one of the places where the Mothers dwell, and interesting in this context are the names it gives to two of these Mātṛkās—*catuṣpatha-niketanā* (She who dwells at the crossroads) and *catuṣpatha-ratā* (She who is enamoured by the crossroads).[7] The much later tantric text *Kaulāvalī Nirṇaya* refers to the continuing association of the crossroads with the cult of the goodess in stating that one should recognize as crossroads that site where there is an image of Caṇḍikā *(catuṣpatham vijānīyāt yatrāste caṇḍikāśile)*.[8] In the 7th century Bāṇa, the court poet of king Harṣavardhana (606-647) tells us of an old temple of the Mothers where king Puṣpabhūti was to meet the saint Bhairavācharya,[9] and other early literary works contain several casual references to Mātṛkās and temples built for them for their worship.

Archaeological evidence on the importance of the Mothers during Gupta times is abundant and there are a number of known sets of stone Mātṛkās, both rock-cut as at Badoh-Pathari and free-standing images as from Besnagar. These sets are all groupings of the well-known Sapta Mātṛkās or Seven Mothers. More interesting from our point of view are two groupings which are not of this category and from which it is perhaps possible to see some derivation of the concept of Yoginīs. One set of images comes from Thanesara-Mahādeva in Rajasthan and the other from Samalaji in Gujarat.



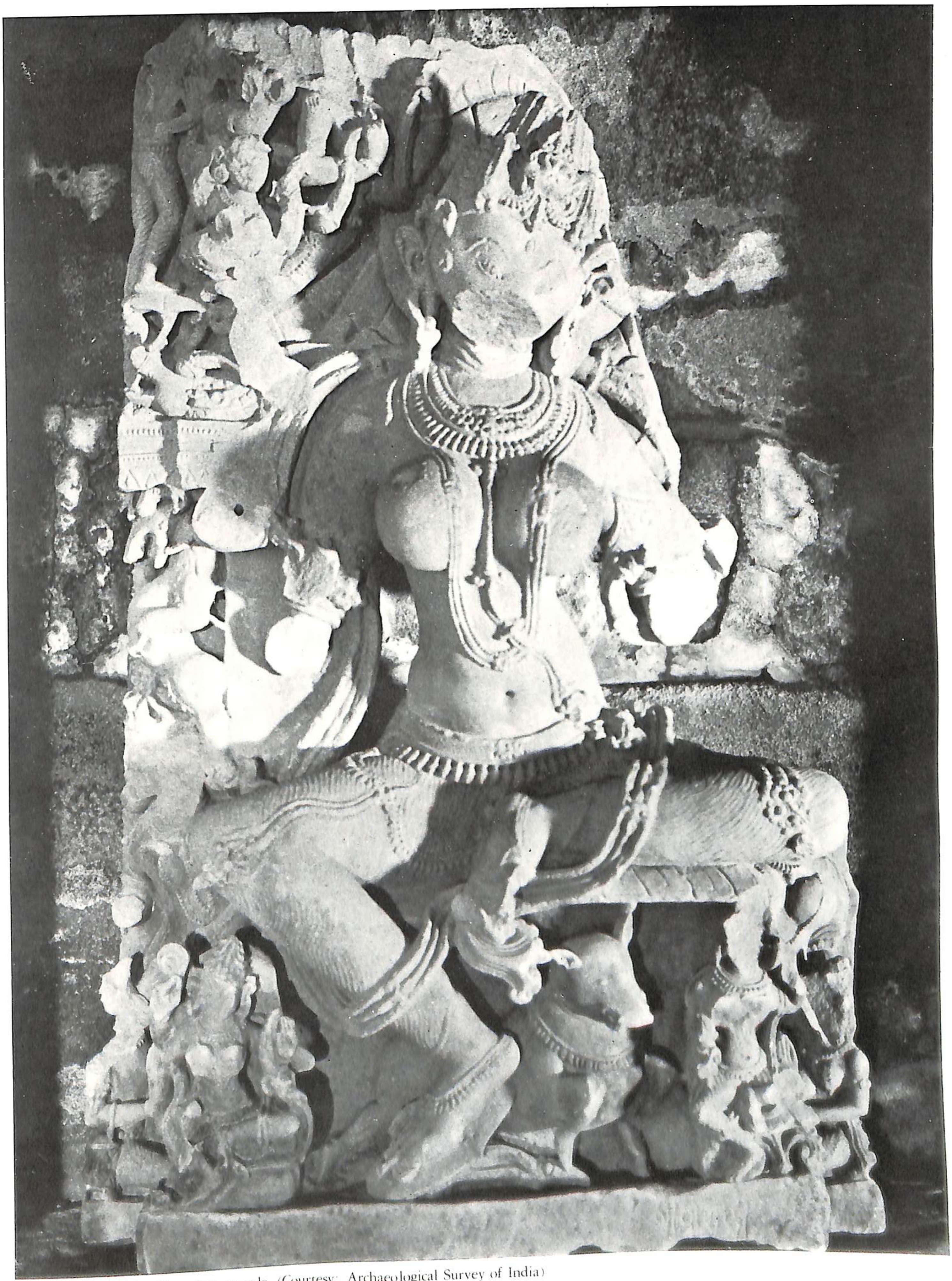
Goddess Kaumārī (?) from Thanesara (Courtesy: Los Angeles County Meseum of Art)

Thanesara-Mahādeva has yielded at least eight Mother goddesses,[10] all but one holding a child and one actually suckling her infant. The images are expressive depictions of the joyful relationship between mother and infant and their only indication of divinity is the undeniable halo. Several of these goddesses have been labelled Skandamātās or Mothers of Skanda and it will be remembered that mythology tells us the Skanda, born from the cast-off seed of Śiva, had six foster mothers, the six Kṛttikās. The exact relationship of the six Skandamātās to the better known concept of Sapta Mātṛkās is an unresolved problem. An image of Skanda was also found along with this Rajasthan group of goddesses, and we have seen that the Mahābhārata too indicates the close connection of Skanda with Mothers in general. The prevalence of this concept during the Gupta period is confirmed by the Bihar pillar inscription of Skandagupta which records the construction of temples, unrivalled elsewhere in the world, dedicated to the Mātṛkās headed by Skanda.[11] The Thanesara goddess without a child is shown in a state of pregnancy which is a very rare occurrence in Indian sculpture, and she is identified as Kaumārī because of the lance which she holds in one hand. It has been suggested that, with a snake coiled around her neck, the goddess is here portrayed as "Yoginī or demoness".[12] The 5th century seems too early a date at which to see any clear concept of the Yoginīs, who may, however, have emerged from a grouping of goddesses such as these.


Mātṛkā Āgneyī from Samalaji (Courtesy: Museum & Picture Gallery, Baroda)

The site of Samalaji in Gujarat has yielded a series of at least seventeen sculptures of Mother goddesses.[13] Among these, a group of the more popular Sapta Mātṛkās is recognisable mainly from their mounts, and these include Kaumārī, Māheśvarī, Aindrī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā. Āgneyī, śakti of the *dikpāla* Agni, is also present. Of the remaining ten images, four hold a child in one arm, one is an emaciated skeletal figure, one is depicted as a tribal goddess with a snake, a bear skin garment and jackal *vāhana,* while the rest exist as elegant torsoes only. There is some slight variation in the size of the images, but as a whole they appear to form a relatively homogenous group, together with an image of Skanda and more than one elegant sculpture of Śiva. All are carved from a grey-green schist and appear to date from the 5th century. It is not clear whether the seventeen Mothers (and there may well have been more originally) belonged to a single shrine or to two separate ones, but which ever way one looks at the Samalaji figures, they suggest a grouping exceeding the standard eight goddesses. It seems that one would not be wrong to presume that temples of the larger grouping of sixty-four Yoginīs may have evolved from such early sanctuaries of multiple Mothers. It is interesting to note that Vārāhī is depicted at Samalaji with a boar mount in place of her more usual buffalo. A second early sculpture of Vārāhī riding a boar instead of a buffalo comes from the site of Amjhara in Rajasthan.[14] Significantly, among the Bheraghat images of Yoginīs, Vārāhī is represented with a boar as her mount. Although this connection seems tenuous, we cannot dismiss it altogether as fortuitous; nor indeed can we ignore the fact that Āgneyī is frequently included in textual lists of the Yoginīs and is portrayed as a Yoginī at Hirapur.

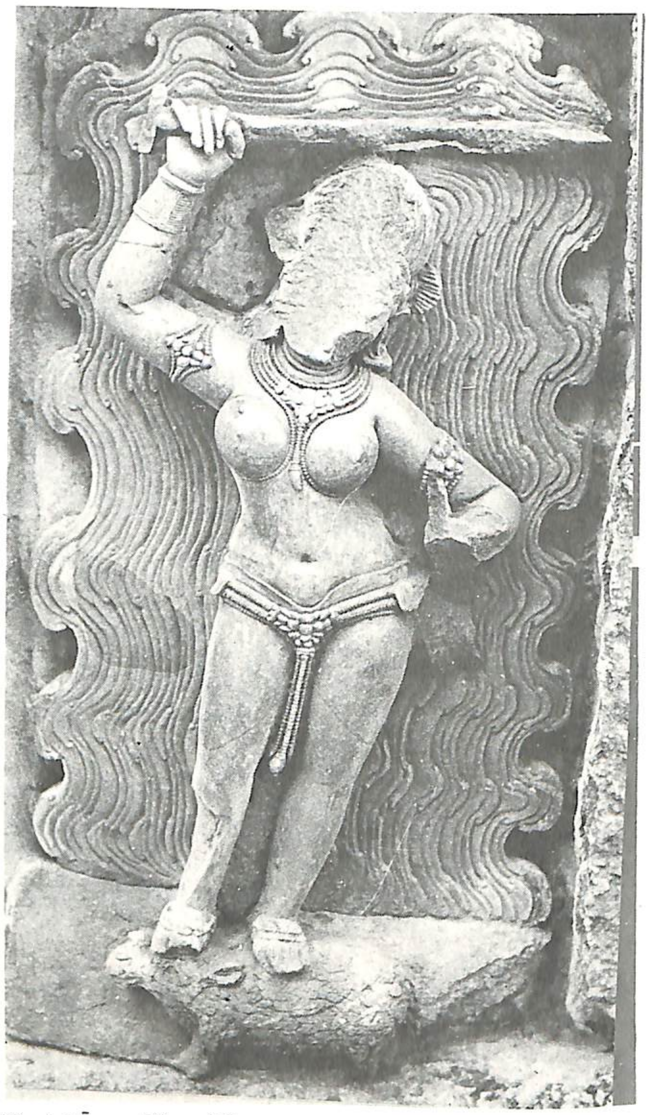
Tribal mother goddess from Samalaji (Courtesy: Museum & Picture Gallery, Baroda)



Yoginī Varāhī from Bheraghat temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

At any rate, it is clear that there were temples of goddesses in this part of southern Rajasthan and adjoining Gujarat where the number of images was more than the traditional seven or eight.

Although we have no direct allusion to the Yoginī cult earlier than the ninth century, it would be wrong to assume that the cult was altogether unknown prior to that date. Kalhaṇa relates in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī* the story of a lovely Yogeśvarī who captured king Baka (this refers to a period soon after the start of the Christian era) as an offering to a circle of goddesses *(devīcakra)*.[15] In a later chapter we find that Kalhaṇa uses the words Yogeśvarī and Yoginī as synonyms. His story of Sandhimat resurrected by a circle of Yoginīs *(yoginīcakra)* of semi-divine character, which we considered earlier, belongs roughly to the Gupta period. As mentioned previously, the historicity of this earlier phase of his history being doubtful, we cannot establish the veracity of such statements; however, his frequent allusions to the circles of Mothers, goddesses and Yoginīs must indicate both the popularity and anitquity of cults associated with the Goddess. The rites and rituals connected with these cults were probably esoteric and involved practices that were unacceptable to orthodox society and hence it is natural that they should find no mention in orthodox literature. This is evident, for instance from the *Harivaṁśa* (4th century A.D.) which associates the worship of the goddess Vindhyavāsinī with barbarian tribes such as the Pulindas and Savaras.[16]



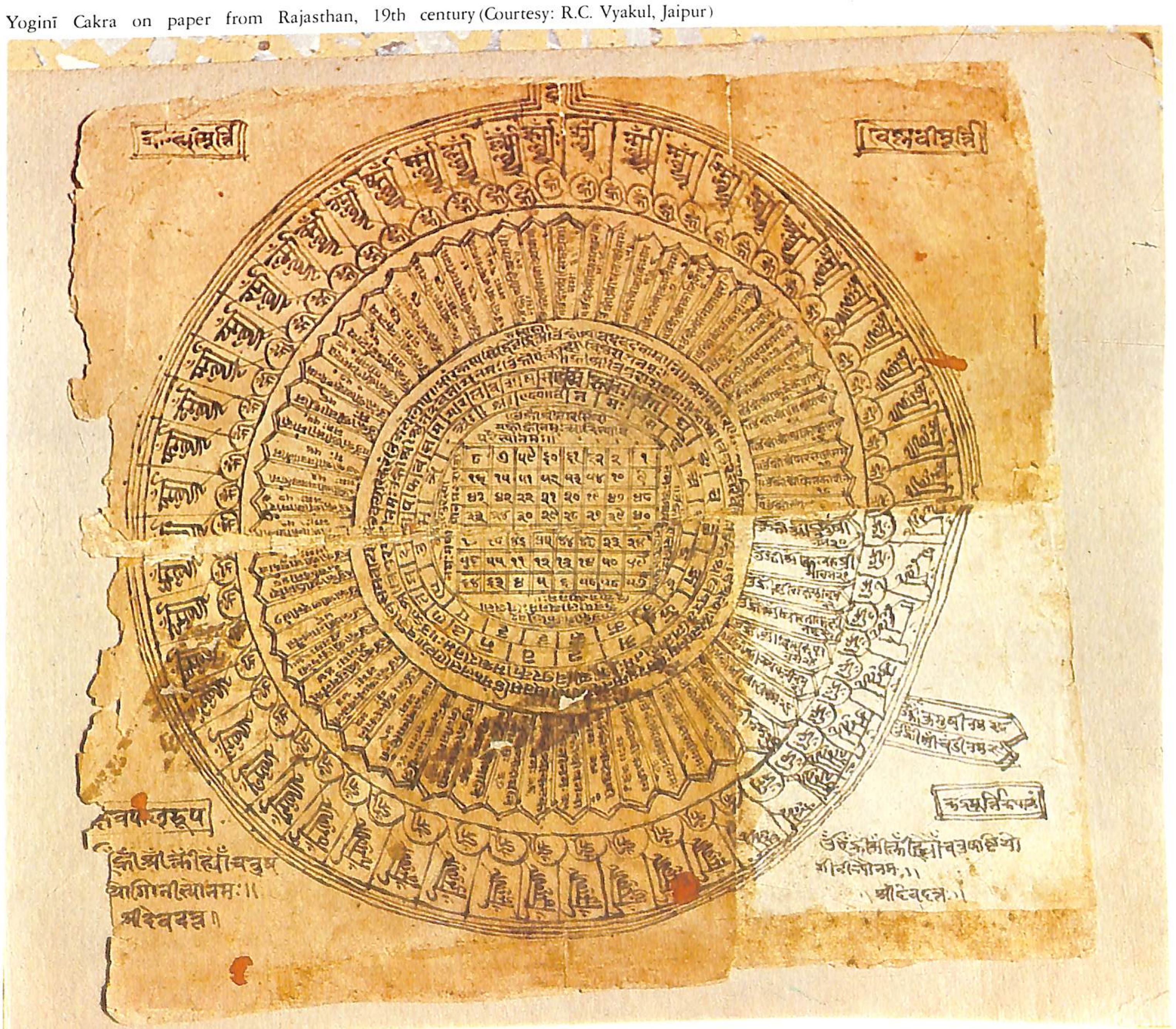
Yoginī Āgneyī from Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

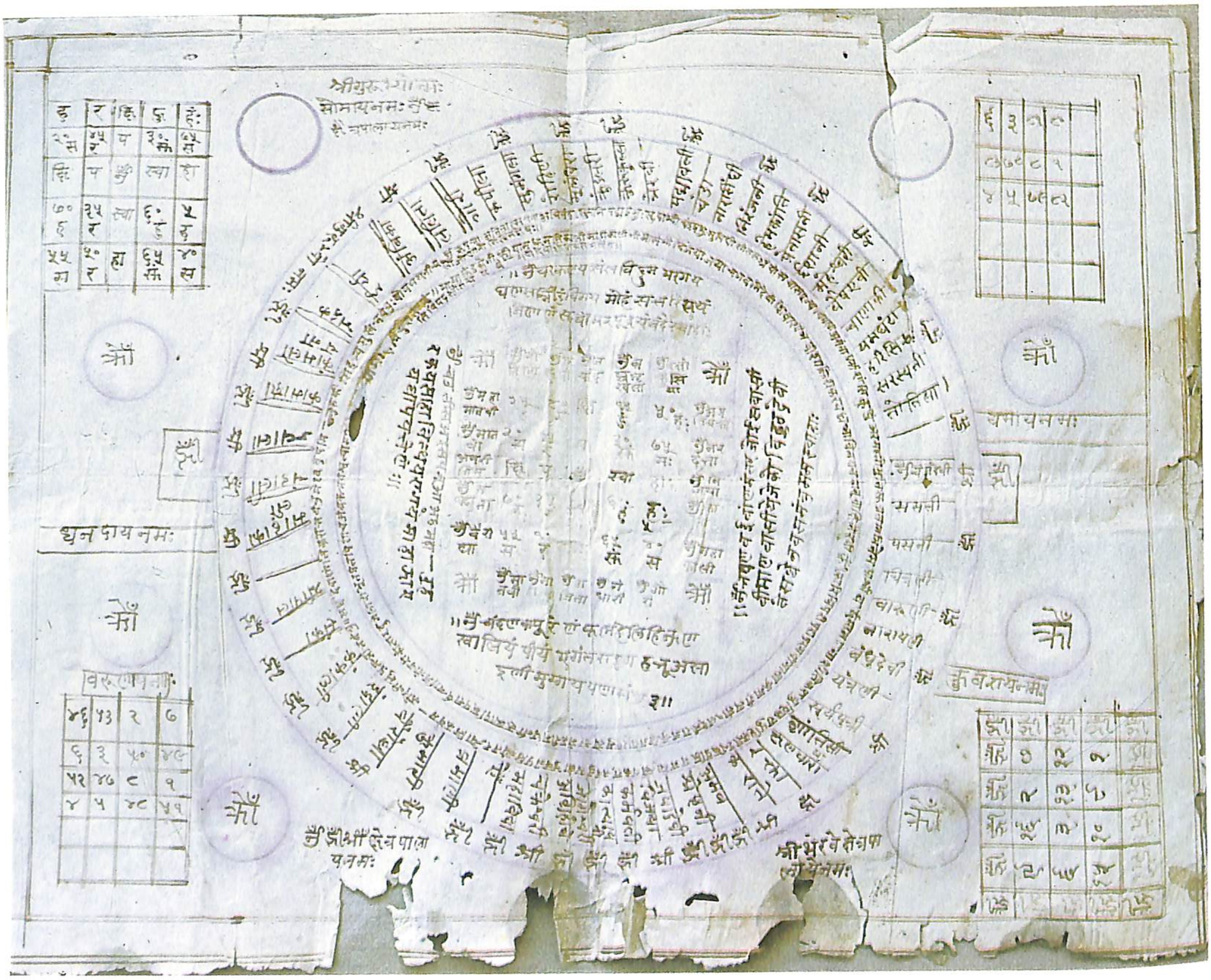
Varāhamihira in his *Bṛhatsamhitā* (6th century) specificially mentions that only those versed in *maṇḍalakrama* (circleworship mode) may worship the Mothers who are mentioned in the plural as *matṛgaṇa*.[17] It would appear, therefore, that just as there were special groups of Brahmins such as the Magas who worshipped Sūrya and the Pāśupatas who worshipped Śiva, so also the Mothers had their own priests. If the Yoginī cult did exist at that time, it must have been even more esoteric and that the cult of the Mātṛkās was perhaps confined to isolated regions. A later text refers to *aṣṭāṣṭakakrama* (mode of worship of 64) in connection with the circle of Yoginīs *(yoginīvṛnda)*,[18] and clearly indicates that there was as specialised manner of worship as also a select group of priests who conducted the ceremonies of the Yoginī cult.

The earliest known orthodox text that contains lists of the sixty-four Yoginīs is the *Agni Purāṇa* which was compiled in its present form some time in the 9th century.[19] Its 52nd chapter which names the 64 Yoginīs and briefly describes them, consists of a total of sixteen lines and is entitled *Devīpratimālakṣaṇa* or "Attributes of Images of the Goddesses", thus indicating that images of the Yoginīs were already being made. For this admittedly heterodox cult to have found acceptance in a *Purāṇa* by the 9th century must testify to the powerful hold it exerted over its increasing fold of followers. One would imagine that the cult was fairly well known for some time before that date and hence it is likely that, whatever its precise antiquity, sometime between A.D. 600 and 850, the cult of the Yoginīs had been accepted in the mainstream of Hinduism.

That this seems to be the general period for the emergence of the cult seems to be corroborated by the tantric tradition as well. There exists a fragmentary manuscript of the *Kubjikāmata* in what has been described as "late Gupta characters'.[20] The *Kubjikāmata* as we know it today from late copies in Nepal, refers to the *Yoginīmata* or doctine of the Yoginīs and one of its chapters is devoted to the Yoginīs.[21] The *Kubjikāmata* itself comprises the fourth section of a collection known as the *Kulalikāmnāya*,[22] of which the first section is the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* which we have seen to be vitally connected with Yoginīs. The term "late Gupta" suggests to us a date around the 7th century, but in the context of another manuscript, the term has been interpreted as the 8th century.[23] This piece of indirect evidence suggests that the Yoginī cult may have emerged as early as the 7th century and certainly in the 8th century, although we have to keep in mind the fact that we are judging the contents of an early text from later versions which probably have undergone many additions and interpolations.

Yoginī Cakra on paper from Rajasthan, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)





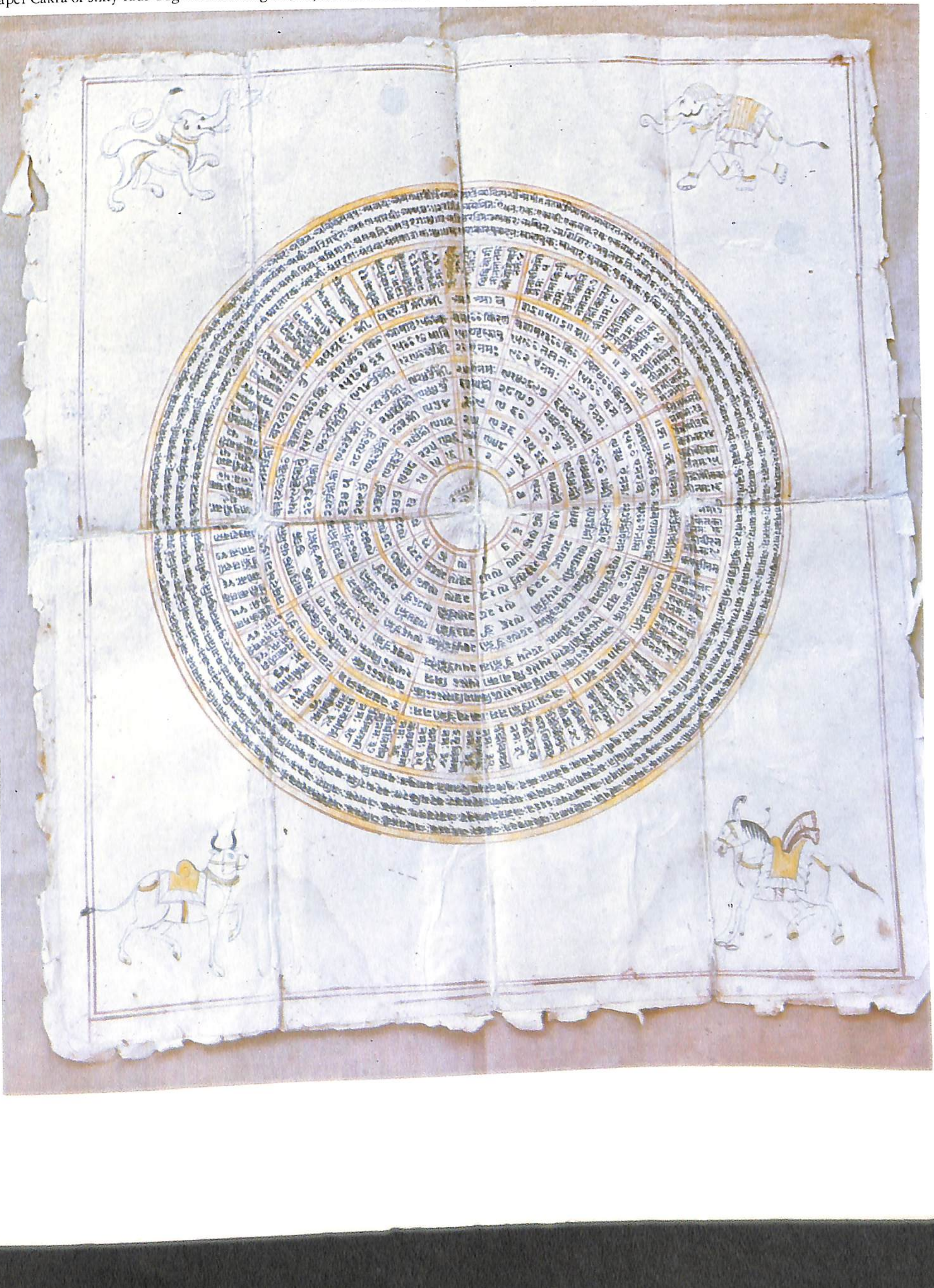
Paper Cakra of sixty-four Yoginīs from Rajasthan, late 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)

A Cambodian inscription dated A.D. 802 refers to the introduction into that country of four tantric texts, one of them being named the *Śiraścheda*.[24] The *Śiraścheda* is another name for the *Jayadratha Yāmala* which, in its third section, contains references to the Yoginīs.[25] We do not know if all four sections as we know them now, formed part of the 9th century *Śiraścheda,* but if they did, then it would seem that the Yoginī cult was known in the 8th century. The *Jayadratha Yāmala* is in the nature of a supplement to the *Brahma Yāmala* which also refers to the Yoginīs.[26] While the earliest known manuscript of this tantra dates to 1052, it has been suggested that the compilation of the text dates to the 8th century.[27]

According to the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya,* a manuscript of which belongs to the eleventh century, Matsyendranātha, the first of the Nātha *gurus,* was responsible for introducing the Yoginī cult among the Kaulas. Most scholars agree with Bagchi that Matsyendranātha must have belonged to a date well prior to 900, since by 1000, the famous Kashmir *paṇḍit*, Abhinavagupta regarded Matsyendranātha as an emanation of Śiva.[28] In any event, although this information does not throw any light on the antiquity of the Yoginī cult, it indicates the popularity of the cult by the tenth century, as well as its association with the Nātha tradition.

The earliest Yoginī temple is a sandstone circle belonging to the second half of the 9th century, but the possibility of earlier brick antecedents must be kept in mind. Perhaps terractotta images of

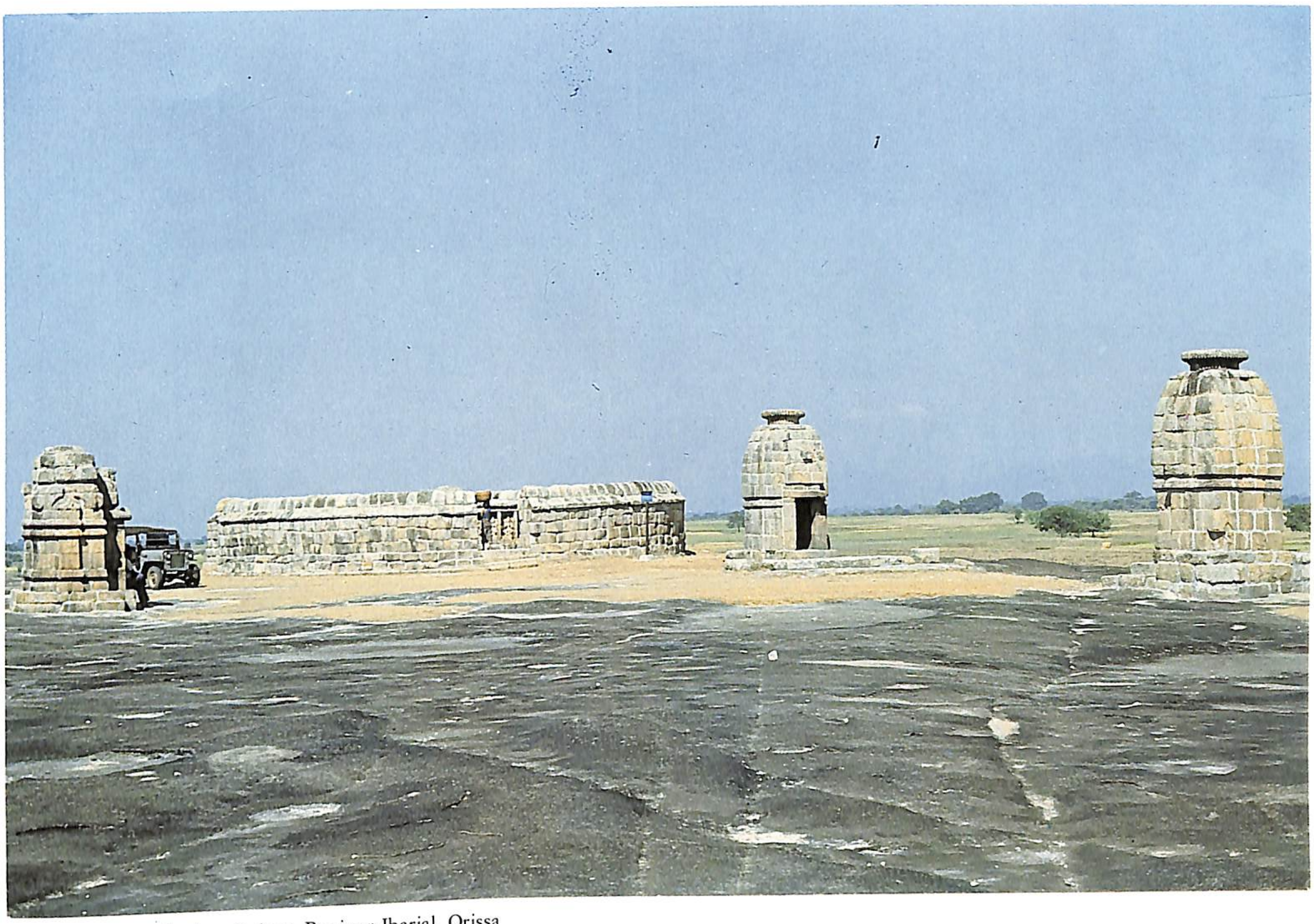
Paper Cakra of sixty-four Yoginīs from Nagaur, Rajasthan, late 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)



the Yoginīs were made for placement in such brick temples, thus explaining *Agni Purāṇa's* use of the term *pratimā* or image in its description of the sixty-four Yoginīs. Kaula texts tells us too that worship through Maṇḍalas and Yantras was considered to be of great importance. The *Kulārṇava Tantra* specifies that worship without such diagrams does not please the diety[29] and it states that the best Yantras are those incised on metal sheets or written on birch leaves.[30] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* ends its list of the 64 Yoginīs with the injunction that the Yoginīs are to be worshipped within a Maṇḍala.[31] The *Matottara Tantra,* in describing its various Cakras of goddesses emphasizes the importance of Maṇḍalas and specifically states that such Cakras are to be drawn *(likhet)* on a scroll *(paṭa)* and used thus for worship and meditation.[32] The 19th century paper Cakras from Rajasthan may be seen as a survival of this age-old practice. It seems likely that when the Yoginī cult first emerged, worship was entirely through the use of such Maṇḍalas, and that temples to house images of the Yoginīs were a later concept and possibly one that arose with royal patronage of the cult.

By A.D. 1000 the cult of the Yoginīs had become so widespread and compelling that the Jains felt the need to proclaim that their saints had gained control over the sixty-four Yoginīs. The Jain saint Śrī Hemacandracārya, born in 1089, is said to have ordered the 64 Yoginīs at Broach in Gujarat to stop harrassing the minister

Kāmākhyā temple, Guwahati, Assam



Yoginī temple and other shrines, Ranipur-Jharial, Orissa

Ambada.[33] Śrī Jinaprabhasūri who lived two centuries later between 1263-1334, is said to have gained control over the 64 Yoginīs.[34] The story is related that the Jain saint made a trip to Ajmer where there was a shrine of the 64 Yoginīs, and obtained a promise from them that they would refrain from troubling the saints of his line. One hundred and fifty years later, during the reign of Sultan Ahmed Shah (1411-1442) the belief in the power of the Yoginīs was still compelling. An anecdote included in Jain texts tells us how the 64 Yoginīs had taken control of the towers of the new fort built around Ahmedabad by the Sultan, and how they harrassed the ruler. Finally, it was the Jain saint Ratnasimhasūri who broke their control of the fort and with the aid of a magical Yantra, banished the 64 Yoginīs.[35]

Geographical Distribution

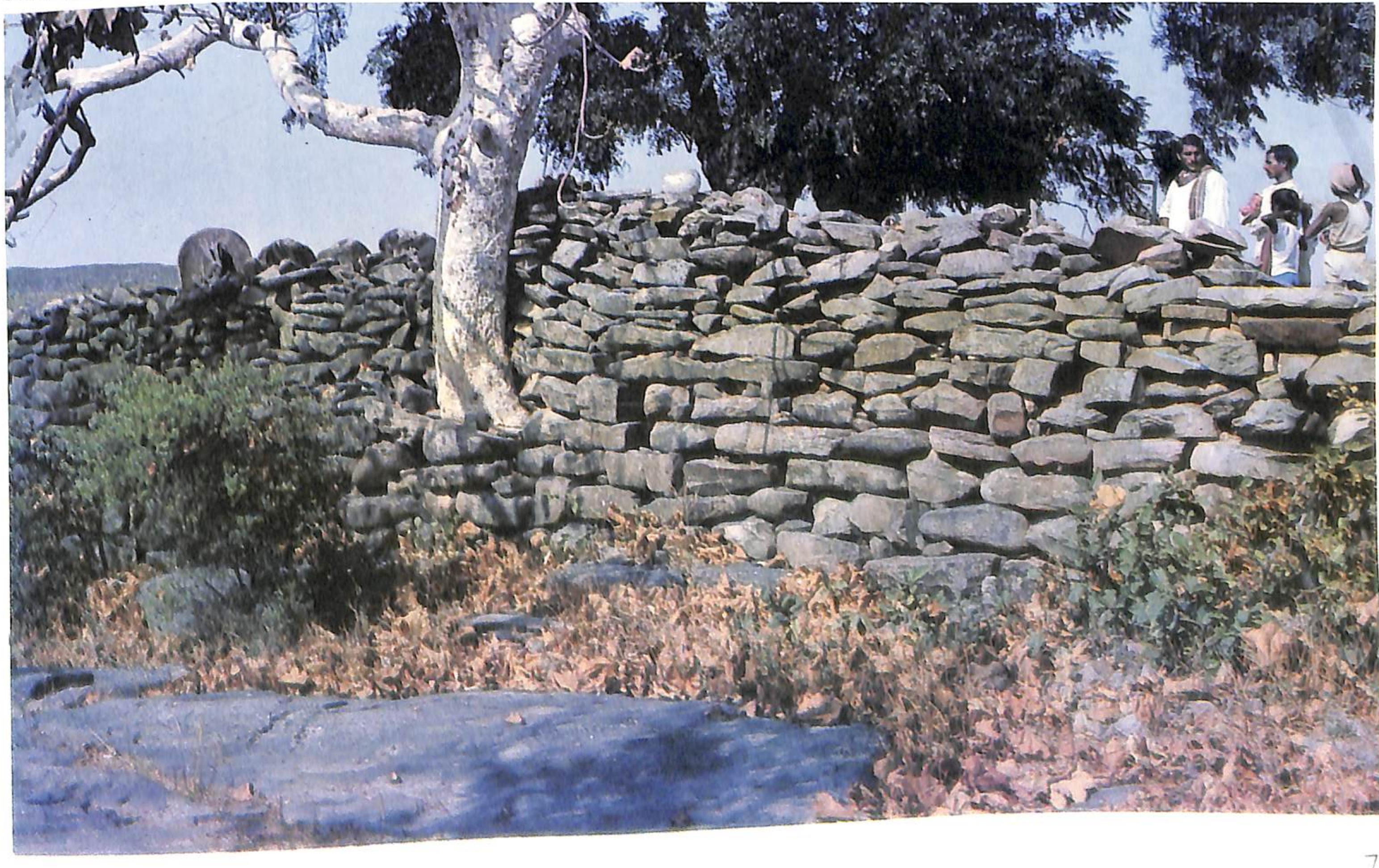
Existing temples of the Yoginīs are scattered in a broad arc across northern India, from the Orissa coast through central India upto the Rajasthan border. It would be incorrect on the basis of these surviving remains to conclude that the Yoginī cult was restricted to this belt across northern India. On the other hand, it appears that the cult had at one time extended its influence over large portions of India.

Hirapur temple, Orissa

Today Assam reveals no remains of Yoginī temples and yet it seems undeniable that the cult was once prominent in these regions. The Kāmākhyā temple in Assam is one of the few Devī shrines where to this day, the daily worship of Devī Kāmākhyā includes the invocation of the 64 Yoginīs, who are named one by one in the *pūjā*. The list of names in today's worship is derived from the *Devī Purāṇa* list of the sixty forms of Devī.[36] The Yoginī cult was obviously of importance at Kāmākhyā and it seems logical to hypothesize that all Devī *pīṭhas*, those sites specially sacred for the worship of the Goddess, were also important centres of the Yoginī cult. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* which contains material pertinent to the Yoginīs, includes two varying lists of sixty-four names (of which one is incomplete),[37] was written in that part of Bengal adjoining Assam, and it contains an entire chapter describing Kamarupa (the ancient name for the Assam area), with its rivers and mountains. Eight of the *Kālikā Purāṇa's* sixty-four Yoginīs were considered more important than the rest and are referred to more often in the text;[38] it is these eight who, with the addition of one more name are later transformed into the well-known grouping of the nine Durgās. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* gives a Yoginī *kavaca* or mystical charm and it speaks of the Yoginī *mata* or doctrine.[39] The Yoginīs are described as the companions of Devī[40] and the text also specifies that the sixty-four Yoginīs are each to be worshipped individually.[41] Several Kaula texts refer to the importance of Kamarupa in connection with the Yoginīs. *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* tells us that the Yoginī Kaula doctrine is to be found in every home in Kamarupa *(kāmarūpe idam śāstram yoginīnām gṛhe gṛhe).* It is also claimed that Matsyendranātha founded and first propogated his Yoginī cult in Assam, although it is believed that he himself belonged to Bengal.[42] The *Kaulāvalīnirṇaya* too refers specifically to Yoginīs and Kamarupa,[43] while the *Vārāhī Tantra* speaks of the group of Yoginīs established in the Kamarupa *pīṭha*.[44].

There is much evidence to suggest that Bengal too was a centre of Yoginī worship, despite the fact that today it has no surviving Yoginī temples. Bengal has always been a centre of tantrism and several tantric works, including the famous *Tantrasāra* of Krishnananda, were written in Bengal. Many texts on Kaula *Cakrapūjā* indirectly reveal their Bengali origin in specifying varieties of fish known only in Bengal waters, for the offering of *matsya,* the first of the five "m"s. We find too that most of the texts that contain lists of the Yoginīs were written in Bengal. The *Agni Purāṇa,* the earliest orthodox text with names and derivations of the 64 Yoginīs, appears to have been composed in the western part of the state.[45] The *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa,* which refers to the Yoginīs as functionaries of Devī, was also written in Bengal, most probably in the eastern part adjacent to Assam.[46] The *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* which describes the manner of the worship of Kālī and of the Yoginīs during Dīvālī, belongs to Bengal. The Dīvālī worship

Stone blocks of the destroyed Yoginī temple at Lokhari

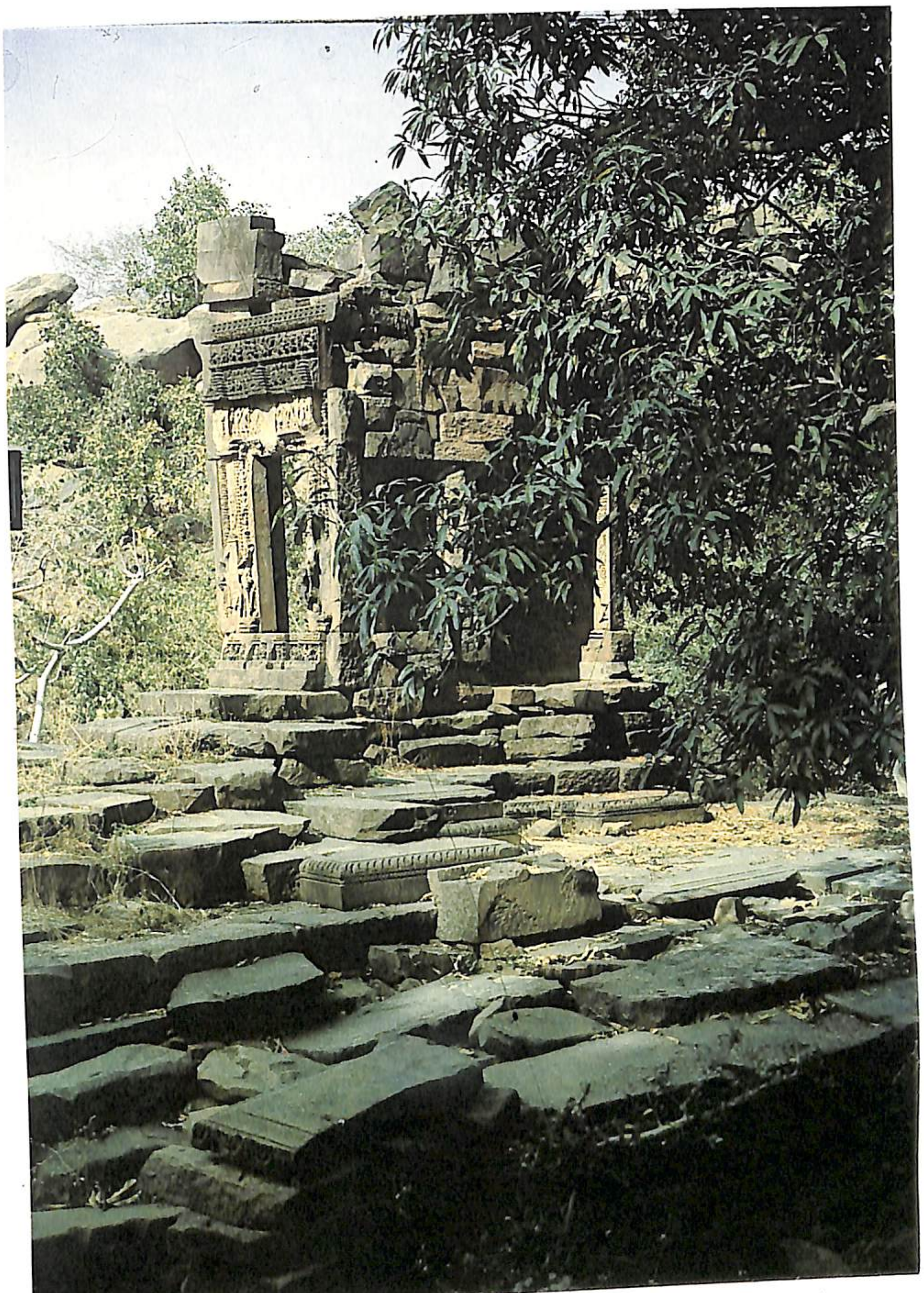


of Kālī is a custom peculiar to Bengal, and the Purāṇa draws up a vivid picture of Kālī surrounded by dancing Yoginīs who drink wine and blood.[47] While the present *Kālikā Purāṇa* may have been written in eastern Bengal and Assam, the earlier lost *Kālikā Purāṇa* appears to have been purely a Bengali composition. This lost *Kālikā, Purāṇa* of which certain sections quoted in other texts still survive informs us that it was a local Bengali custom *(deśācāra)* to worship the group of Yoginīs along with Devī on the 8th and 9th days of the Durgā *pūjā* festival.[48] Thus, the Yoginī cult must once have been of major importance in Bengal too, but as it plays an insignificant role in Krishnananda's *Tantrasāra* (16th century), we may conclude that it was already disappearing by that date.

The traditional association of tantra and the cult of the Goddess with the adjoining area of Orissa is well-known. In fact, there are those who believe that the important Devī *Pīṭha* of Uḍḍiyāna is to be found in Orissa rather than in Afghanistan, and a great deal of evidence can be found to support such an assertion. In view of the prevalence of the tantric mode of worship in Orissa, it is not surprising to find the Yoginī cult of major significance in the state. In the 9th century, a beautiful temple of the Yoginīs was built in the coastal strip near Bhubanesvar, while early in the 10th century, another temple was built deep in the interior. Yet, not many Oriya manuscripts containing information on the Yoginīs have come to light. The only major text that has so far emerged is the 15th century *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* which names the Yoginīs and describes them as creations from the body of Caṇḍī (See Appendix I). Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sarma of Puri has in his possession a *dhyāna* of the sixty-four Yoginīs, written on palm-leaf in the Oriya script and of unknown antiquity; this text, however, is in the nature of a descriptive *nāmāvalī,* giving little other information on these deities.[49]

The region of central India, north of the river Narmada and south of the Jumna, contains evidence of no less than eleven Yoginī temples. Although contemporary literature indicates the importance of the Kula cult in this region, no textual evidence survives on the popularity of the Yoginī cult itself. However, it is quite evident from the extant remains in these forested, hilly tracts, that central India was an important centre of Yoginī worship.

In the west, the Yoginī cult appears to have been known in Rajasthan and Gujarat. We may recall here the undoubtedly firm evidence discussed in the previous section, of the antiquity of goddess worship in Rajasthan. This area still abounds in paper and cloth *cakras* of the 64 Yoginīs, and must have once erected Yoginī temples. The adjoining area of Gujarat also appears to have had several such temples. A Yoginī temple once existed in the Kamli village of the Siddhpur district, near a temple dedicated to the Mātṛkā Brāhmī. When the temple crumbled to ruins, a new one was built to replace it, and within this modern structure is a long slab of stone with small engravings of the 64 Yoginīs.[50] It is reported too that an old Yoginī temple existed in the Palodhar village of the Mehsana district, but this too has apparently crumbled away. Gujarat once had a famous Yoginī temple, judging from Jain texts that refer to four towns specially renowned for their Yoginī



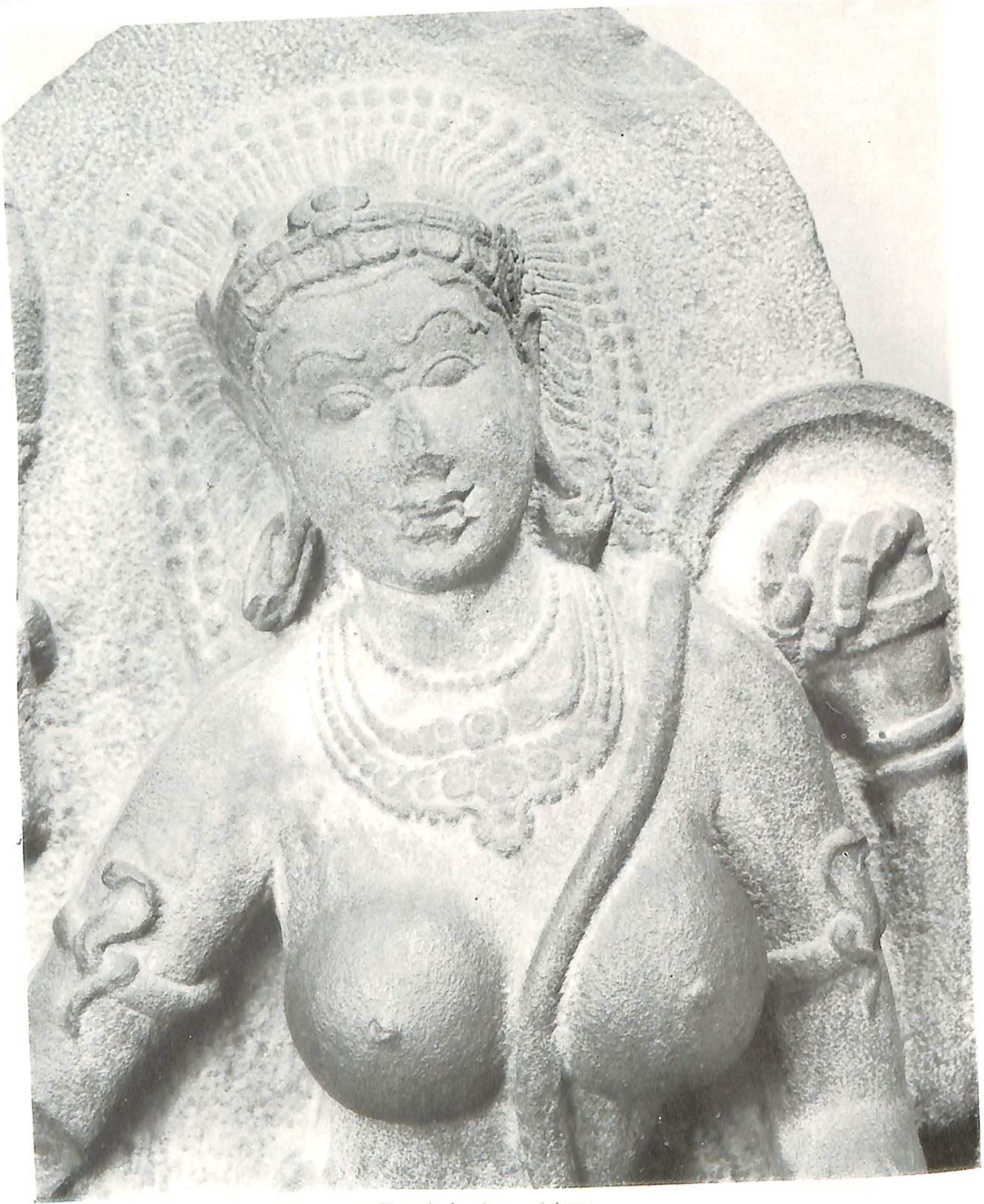
A temple in the glen at Rikhiyan, site of a now-destroyed Yoginī temple.

shrines—Broach in Gujarat, Ajmer, Ujjain and Yoginīpura (modern Delhi).[51] It is certainly a matter for regret that none of these temples survives.

We have already discussed the many references to the Mothers, Yoginīs and Yogeśvarīs in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. Traditionally, Kashmir has been a stronghold of both tantrism in general and the Śākta religion in particular; in all likelihood, the Yoginī cult was once prevalent in Kashmir. The other Himalayan country where tantric traditions have remained strong is Nepal. The archives and monasteries in Nepal are extremely rich in manuscripts of tantric works. Among these are the important *Śrī Matottara Tantra* and the *Kubjikāmata*, both dealing with the cult of the Yoginīs, and known primarily from manuscripts written in the local Newari script. The large number of copies of these texts in Nepal strongly suggests that the Yoginī Kaula cult was once of great importance in the region. And yet, strangely enough, there are no remnants of

Yoginī temples in Nepal, nor are there any known painted Maṇḍalas of the Yoginīs.

Turning to peninsular India south of the Narmada river, we find that a festival in honour of the Yoginīs was performed till recent times in the Bombay region, indicating that the Yoginī cult was once familiar in Maharashtra.[52] This Yoginī *vrata* was performed by the womenfolk, on the new moon day of the month of Śrāvaṇa (July-August), to ensure the safety of their children. The story related in connection with this *vrata* tells of the unfortunate Videhā who lost her children and was driven out of her home by her mother-in-law. Wandering the countryside in search of her children and weeping in despair, she came across a temple of the Yoginīs and prostrated herself before the images, entreating the goddesses to come to her aid. In the total darkness of the new moon

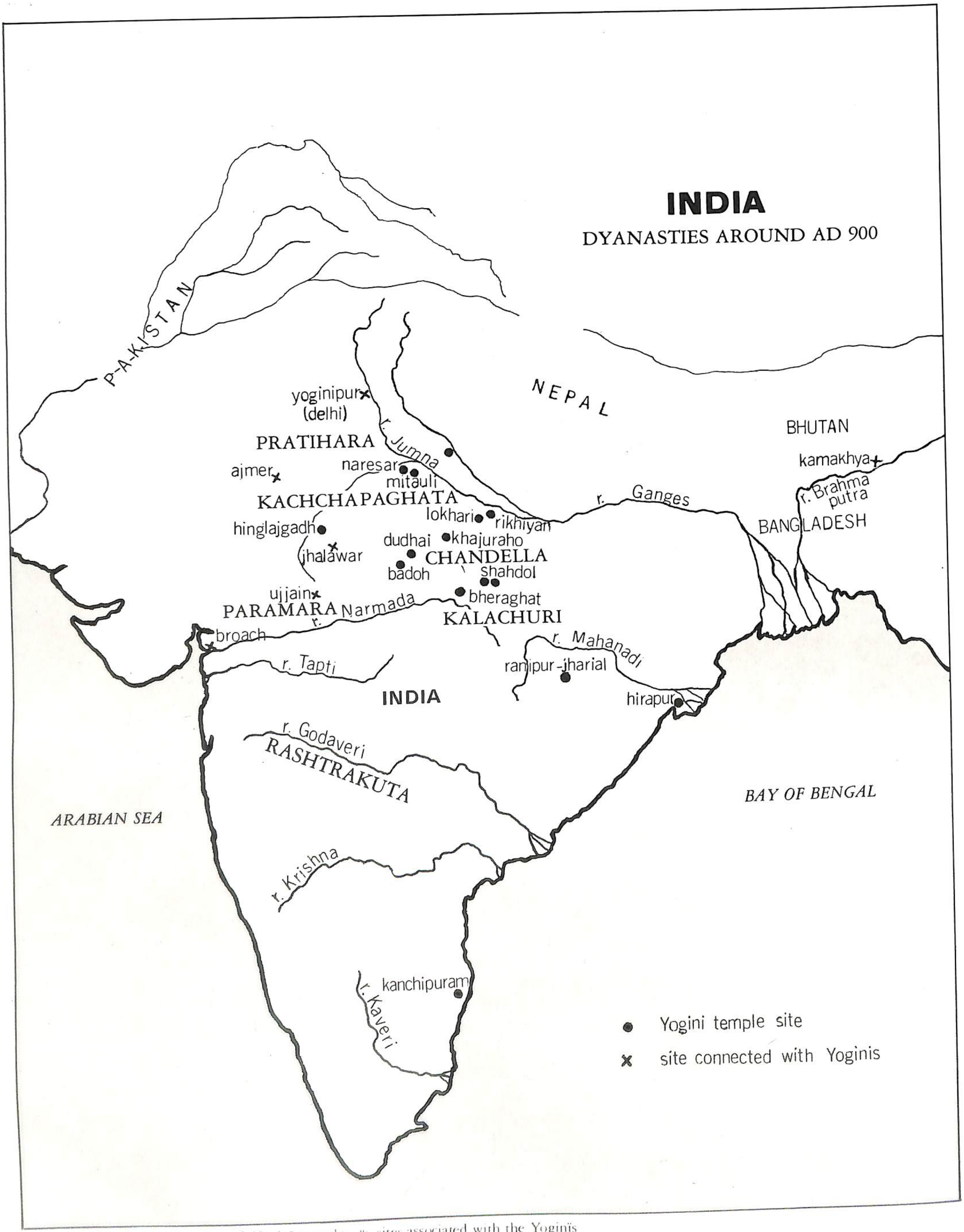


Yoginī from Kaveripakkam (Courtesy: Detroit Institute of Arts) night, the goddesses appeared before her in the flesh and restored her infants to her. We are reminded in this context of Yoginīs with fearsome names like Garbhabhakṣī (Eater of foetus) and Śiśughnī (Killer of children). The role of protectress of children assigned to the Yoginīs, would naturally ensure that every mother became a devout follower of the Yoginī cult.

Śrīparvata in Andhra (modern Śrīśailam) appears to have been a tantric centre from the 6th century A.D. References in Bāṇa's (606-647) *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* indicate the importance of the town for the Śākta faith, and it has been suggested that heterodox Śaiva sects such as the Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas first rose to prominence in south India where Śaivism has always been predominant.[53] While we have no definite evidence of the prevalence of the Yoginī cult in the Andhra region, a late manuscript in the local Telugu script pertaining to the worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs,[54] indicates that the cult was not totally alien to the region.

It has been suggested, primarily on the basis of inscriptional material, that there is evidence of the Yoginī cult at Kolar in Karnataka.[55] The Kolaramma temple, dated by inscription to around A.D. 1000, is a shrine of the Seven Mātṛkās in which the Mātṛkā Cāmuṇḍā is the main deity worshipped locally by the name of Kolaramma (Mother of Kolar). A slightly later record of donations to the temple mentions a provision for offerings of liquor *(madyapāna)* as part of the worship of Yoginī. The word appears to be used here as an appelation of Devī (we have seen that this is a known usage) and it does not indicate the sixty-four Yoginīs. Other beneficiaries mentioned in the record include four *brahmacārins,* four *yoginīs,* four *yogeśvaras,* three *bhairavas,* a lecturer, a priest and a group of masons. This second usage of the term Yoginī indicates a female adept of Yoga and not a goddess. On present information, there appears to be little evidence of the prevalence of the Yoginī cult in Karnataka.

In Tamilnadu, however, it appears that a group of eleven images of Yoginīs were recovered from the region around Kancipuram. It is interesting to note that the 12th century Tamil text, *Takka Yaga Parani* (the Dakṣa *yajña* story) dealing with the Darasuram temple, gives a graphic description of Kālī seated under an *aśvattha* tree *(ficus religiosa)* and attended upon by Bhairavas and Yoginīs.[56] The text indicates that by the 12th century, if not earlier, the concept of Yoginīs as deities attendant upon Devī, was prevalent in Tamilnadu. For over a hundred years, scholars have mistakenly believed in the existence of a temple of the sixty-four Yoginīs in the Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu. It is necessary to dispel this misconception which has been repeated in recent publications.[57] The original reference mention a stone pillar "and surrounding it in a circle were eight stone images with their faces turned inwards".[58] This description of eight images, perhaps of Mātṛkās, was somehow turned transformed into a temple of 64 Yoginīs. An extensive survey of the villages in the Udumulpet taluka (in which the Trimurti temple of the original report is located) does not reveal the existence of a temple of the Yoginīs, and local village authorities rule out the possibility of its existence without their


INDIA
DYANASTIES AROUND AD 900
PAKISTAN
NEPAL
BHUTAN
BANGLADESH
yoginipur
(delhi)
PRATIHARA
r. Jumna
ajmer
naresar
mitauli
KACHCHAPAGHATA
r. Ganges
kamakhya
r. Brahma putra
lokhari
rikhiyan
hinglajgadh
dudhai
khajuraho
jhalawar
CHANDELLA
badoh
shahdol
ujjain
bheraghat
PARAMARA
r. Narmada
KALACHURI
broach
r. Mahanadi
r. Tapti
ranipur-jharial
INDIA
hirapur
r. Godaveri
RASHTRAKUTA
BAY OF BENGAL
ARABIAN SEA
r. Krishna
kanchipuram
r. Kaveri
● Yogini temple site
× site connected with Yoginis

Map of India showing location of Yogini temples & sites associated with the Yoginis knowledge. South India may have had a Yoginī temple, but it was not at Coimbatore.

The Yoginī cult appears then to have been formulated around the year A.D. 700 when worship of the Yoginīs, usually in a group of sixty-four, was commenced. It is probable that the early mode of worship was entirely through Cakras, Maṇḍalas and Yantras, painted on cloth, drawn on the ground with powdered colours or engraved on metal sheets. The cult appears to have rapidly gathered momentum and spread over large parts of India. Probably, it was only with royal patronage of the cult that stone temples were built with niches to house images of the Yoginīs, thus leaving us with tangible evidence of the popularity of the Yoginī cult.

Historical Milieu of the Yoginī Temples

The extant Yoginī temples, situated in the modern Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, seem by and large to lie on the fringe of a region known in ancient times as Madhyadeśa or Āryāvarta and comprising the plains of the rivers Indus, Jumna and Ganges. However, it would be wrong to presume that during the period when the temples were built, the pure land of Āryāvarta was still a bastion of Brahmanical orthodoxy. One or two temples of the Yoginīs in Uttar Pradesh may have been within the confines of ancient Āryāvarta, while Yoginīpura on the outskirts of modern Delhi was definitely in the heartland of the sanctified region. In any event, the regions where the temples are located were ruled, in those times, by different dynasties and we will try and demonstrate in the following pages that the cult of the Yoginīs may have owed much to royal patronage.

None of the Yoginī temples contain any inscriptions directly related to their construction, nor does contemporary medieval literature refer to the temples or to the patronage of the Yoginī cult. Nevertheless, from the historical information available, it is interesting to try and reconstruct a picture of the ambience in which the Yoginī temples were created and to see if we can determine who were the builders of these unusual shrines. This historical picture is all the more important since it appears that royalty was closely connected with the Yoginī cult. The *Kulārṇava Tantra* indicates the importance of royal worship of the 64 Yoginīs in a verse which states that if a king worships the 64 Yoginīs with devotion, his fame will reach to the shores of the four oceans:

rājā yaḥ kārayeddevī bhaktyastāstakapūjanam
catuḥsāgara paryantam mahīm śāsti na saṁśayaḥ[59]

Texts on *Yoginī Sādhanā* specify that the Yoginīs, worshipped as wife, will make a man into the king of kings *(rajendraḥ sarvarājānām)*.[60] The special importance of royal worship of the group of eighty-one Yoginīs has been emphasized in the *Śrī Matottara Tantra,* and we have seen that it tells us that such worship will enable the king to achieve success in his military campaigns and to ward off invasions from neighbouring kingdoms.[61] One may surmise that the construction of stone temples of the Yoginīs, which would have involved considerable expenditure, must have been the result of royal patronage.

Candellas

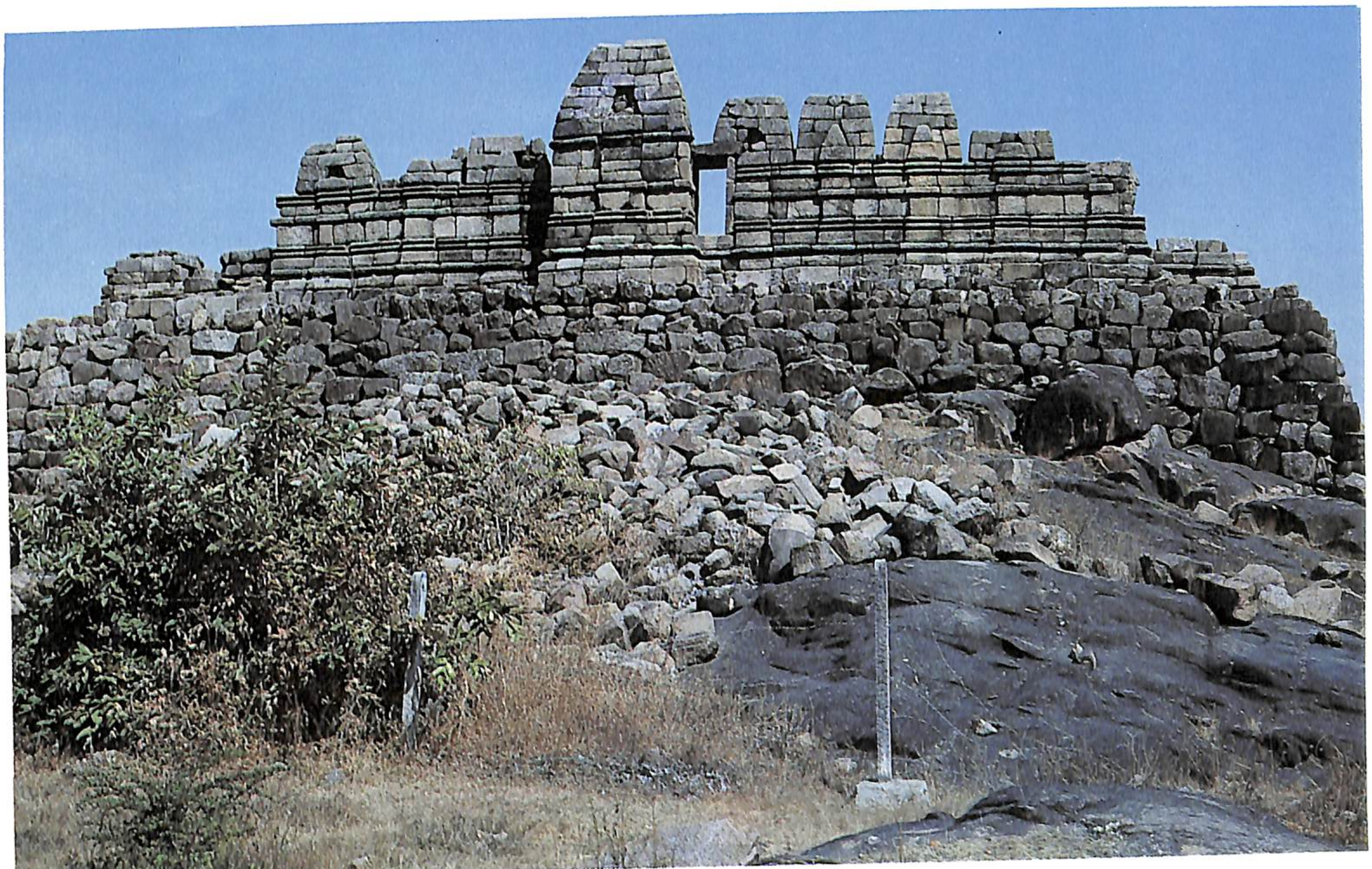
Eight of the extant Yoginī temples are located in territories which were directly or indirectly under the control of the Candella dynasty. The Candellas, appearing in the first quarter of the 9th century and surviving till the end of the 13th centtury, were an influential and powerful dynasty in central India.[62] At first under the nominal sway of the Pratiharas, the Candellas established themselves as an independent kingdom in A.D. 954 under the sovereignty of Dhanga (950-1002) and Vidyādhara (1015-1036), the Candella kingdom consisted of the area bounded by the rivers Jumna to the north, Narmada to the south, Chambal to the west and Tons to the east. Whthin this region are the Yoginī temples at Khajuraho, Lokhari, Rikhiyan, Dudahi, Badoh, Hinglajgadh and the two temples of Naresar and Mitauli near Gwalior which was ruled by feudatories of the Candellas. The centre of Candella activity was the area around Khajuraho which appears to have been their early capital.

During the first half of the 11th century, Muslim invasions of Candella territory were frequent, starting with the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1019, and the fortunes of the dynasty fluctuated greatly. One can, therefore, imagine the constantly threatened Candella monarchs paying particular attention to the cult of the Yoginīs who, as we have shown, were believed to come to the aid of royalty. However, there is no direct evidence to connect the Candellas with any of the Yoginī temples in their kingdom, although we cannot ignore the fact that one of these temples is located at Khajuraho which was their capital. It may also be pointed out that in this instance the Yoginī temple would have been within or close to the city proper. Khajuraho also provides other indirect evidence for the Yoginī cult, or at least for Kaula-Kāpālika sects with which the Yoginī cult was closely associated.

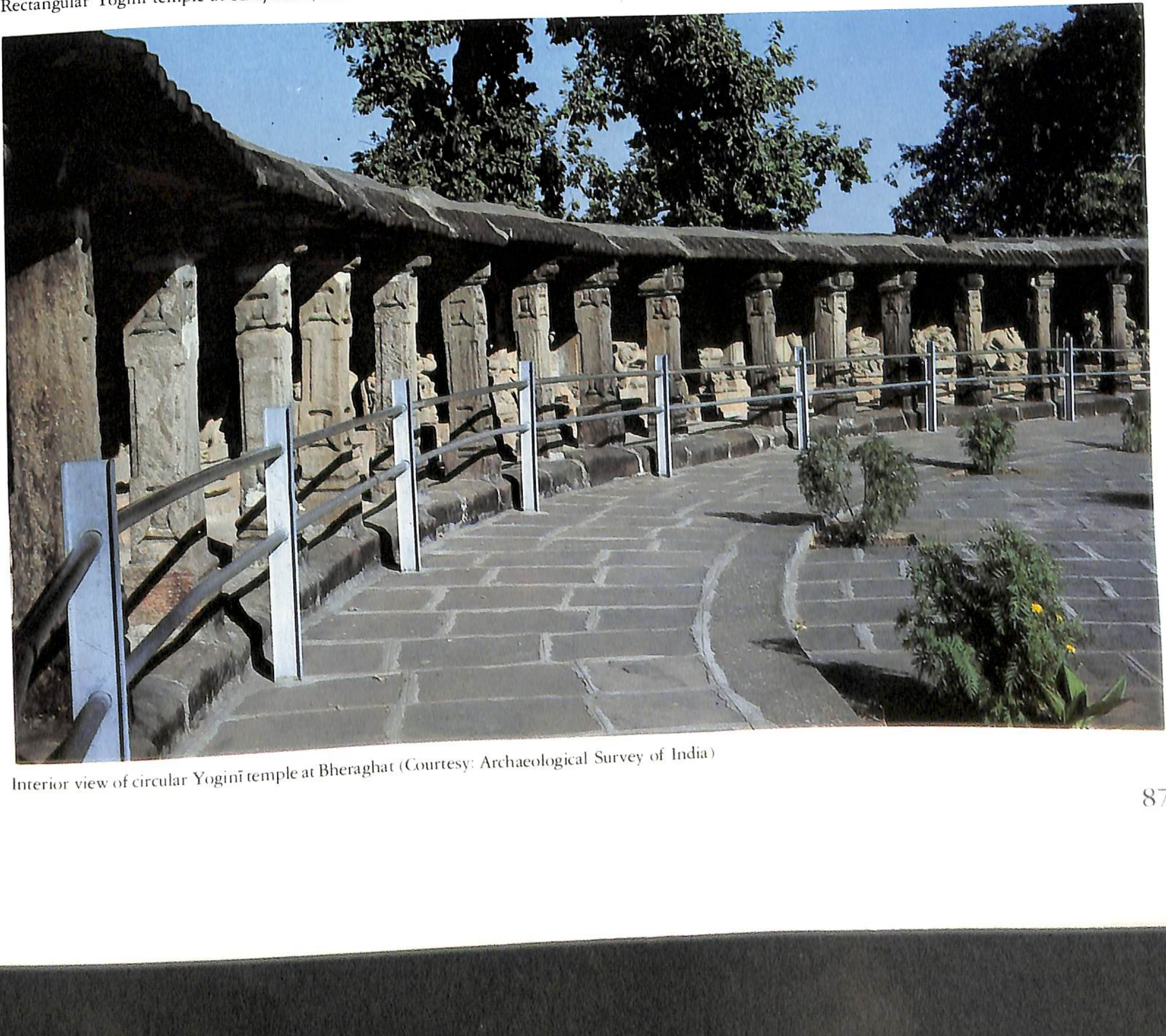
The Candella monarch Kīrtivarman, ruling between 1060-1100, revived the fortunes of the dynasty that had suffered from a series of Muslim attacks, and restored its status as an important power in Central India. It was at the court of this king that Krishṇamisra composed his drama *Prabodhacandrodaya*, which contains references to the Kāpālikas and Kaulas. The drama tells of a Kāpālika who explains their cult practices to a Jain:

> "We offer oblations of human flesh mixed with brains, entrails and marrow. We conclude our fast by drinking liquor *(surā)* from the skull of a Brahman. At that time the god Mahābhairava should be worshipped with offerings of awe-inspiring human sacrifices from whose severed throats blood flows in torrents."[63]

As they drink wine and dance, the Kāpālika extols his doctrine through which the eight great *siddhis* may be won without having to abandon the pleasures of the senses. The Jain finally praises the Kāpālika, addressing him as "King of Teachers" and as *Kulāchārya*, this latter title indicating the very close relationship between the Kaulas and Kāpālikas. The earlier *Karpūramañjarī* of Rajaśekhara (c. 900) refers to a tantric master magician as a Kaula *siddha;* a later commentary calls him a Kāpālika.[64] While the two sects appear to have been closely parallel in their practices, the Kāpālikas could be



Rectangular Yoginī temple at Khajuraho, rear view



Interior view of circular Yoginī temple at Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India) distinguished because they always carried a staff, wandered around as mendicants with female companions, and were greatly preocupied with human sacrifice. By contrast, the Kaula path was less extreme and could be followed without necessarily abandoning home and family. It was aceeptable enough for the *Lalitā Sahasranāma* to describe Devī as "One served by followers of the Kaula path", and to give her titles like Kuleśvarī, Akula and Kaulinī.[65]

Khajuraho is today a world famous site, not only for its magnificent temples, but because of the preponderance of erotic sculptures on the temple walls. Whatever the general belief about the significance of these sculptures, it has been demonstrated that some of the erotic carvings portray ascetics of the Kaula and Kāpālika sects and occasionally also *kṣapaṇaka* or Jains.[66] Even if these are meant to be caricatures, they demonstrate that tantrism, specially of the Vāmācāra variety, was flourishing in the region, apparently under the auspices of both the Kāpālika and Kaula orders. The blatant carving of such figures on the temple walls suggets that the Candella rulers who built the temples, were themselves patrons of the Kaula and Kāpālika sects. We have shown earlier that the Yoginī cult was a branch of the Kaula sect and was probably known as Yoginī Kaula. It is thus possible that the Candellas were also patrons of the Yoginī Kaula cult, and certain of the monarchs themselves, or members of the royal family, may have been responsible for building some of the Yoginī temples within their kingdom.

Kacchapaghātas

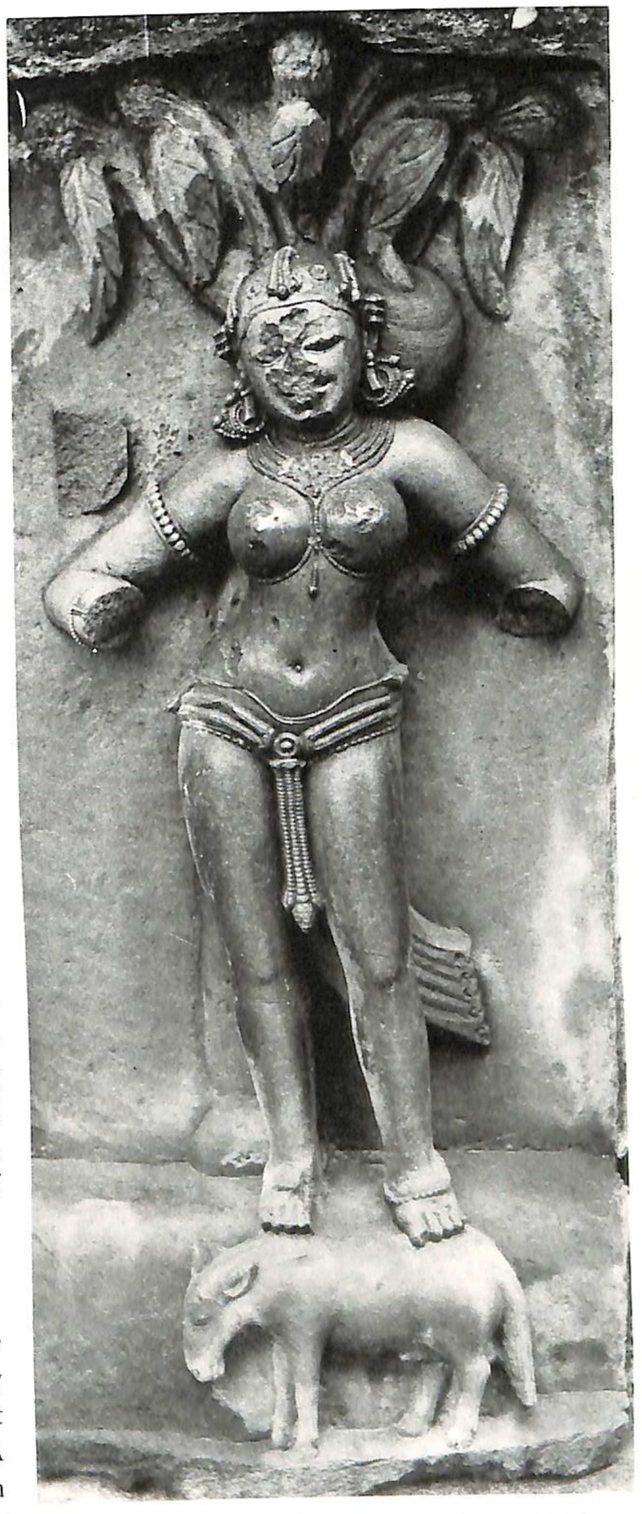
The area surrounding Gwalior was under the sway of the Kacchapaghātas who became feudatories of the Candellas from A.D. 950. In 1017, Kacchapaghāta Arjuna was ordered by Candella Vidyādhara to capture the important town of Kanauj, and the fact that he was able to achieve this, testifies to the strength of this vassal dynasty. The Naresar Yoginī temple appears to have been built during the period of Kacchapaghāta vassalage. Inscriptional evidence suggests, however, that the Mitauli shrine was constructed at a later date by king Devapāla (1055-1075), when the Kacchapaghātas had thrown off Candella overlordship and had established itself as an independent power. The badly damaged record that gives this information is engraved on the wall of the Mitauli Yoginī temple.[67] It refers to the construction of the shrine and mentions mahārājā Devapāla and his queen. The inscription also contains the date of A.D. 1323 and it appears to have been added durng Rajput Kacchavaha rule of the area, probably to commemorate some major donation to the Yoginī temple. From 1100, these Rajput Kacchavaha rulers (not to be confused with the Kacchapaghātas) took over the Gwalior region. In the centuries that followed, Gwalior was frequently captured by the Muslims, and though it paid token homage to Delhi, the Kacchavahas threw off the imperial yoke whenever there were signs of weakness at the centre.

Yoginī from Bheraghat temple

Kalacuris

The Yoginī temple at Bheraghat is located in territory that was under the control of the Kalacuris of Tripuri, also known as the Cedis. The dynasty came into power as an independent ruling family around A.D. 850 and their capital of Tripuri, today's Tewar, is only four miles from Bheraghat. Yuvarāja I who ruled from 915-945 had to fight against the Candellas and barely managed to keep them out of his kingdom. He and other Kalacuri rulers after him were special patrons of a sect of Śaiva ascetics known as the Mattamayūras. Yuvarāja I and his queen Nohala built several temples and monasteries for them and gave an entire third of the state revenue for their maintenance. The *Golakī maṭha* (circular monastery) was one important structure built for the Mattamayūras by Yuvrāja I, and it has been suggested that this circular monastery is, in fact, the circular Yoginī temple.[68] However, this does not appear to be the case; a Yoginī shrine and a monastery would surely have been distinguished in the inscription. Also, a consideration of later Mattamayūra history reveals that the *Golakī maṭha* became so famous that *Golakī* branches which were clearly monasteries were established at several locations in Andhra and the northern part of Tamilnadu.[69] It is likely that the foundations of a circular structure, 110 feet in diameter, recently discovered near Tewar, represents Yuvarāja I's *Golakī maṭha*.[70]

Assuming that Yuvarāja I was single-minded in his devotion to Śiva and his patronage of the Mattamayūra sect, it would appear to have been one of his successors who was responsible for the construction of the Bheraghat Yoginī temple. This monarch may have been his son Lakshmanarāja or his grandson Yuvarāja II, both of whom had to fight several battles to retain Kalacuri supremacy in the area. Indeed, this factor may have been the motivation for one of these Kalacuri monarchs to build a temple to the eighty-one Yoginīs, beseeching their aid in strengthening their position and establishing dynastic stability. The area of Shahdol, which had two temples of the Yoginīs, also appears to have formed part of Kalacuri domain.



Yoginī from Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Orissa

Upto A.D. 1000, the region of Orissa never found itself under the rule of one single dynasty and the political scene in the 9th and early 10th centuries was still confused, with as many as six different ruling families controlling small independnet kingdoms. A defeated dynasty often lay dormant as petty chieftains for as much as a century, and took advantage of a decline in power to declare themselves monarchs again. In view of the complex political scene and in the absence of inscriptional evidence, it is not easy to clearly associate the construction of either of Orissa's two Yoginī temples with any particular line of monarchs.

We have no clear information regarding the dynasty ruling coastal Orissa around A.D. 900 when the Yoginī temple at Hīrapur near Bhubanesvar was constructed. The early Bhauma-Kara kings had ceased to reign by the year 840, while the Somavaṁśīs took over the area only around 1000. Possibly, during this intervening period, the Bhanja rulers of the Baudh group, apparently dormant chieftains at this time, temporarily extended their rule into the coastal area. These Bhanja rulers are known to have been worshippers of the Goddess, and in their inscriptions they frequently styled themselves as "favoured by the Goddess". Possibly, they may have been responsible for the construction of the Hirapur shrine.

The temple of the Yoginīs at Ranipur-Jharial in interior Orissa seems to have been built in territory under the control of the early Somavaṁśīs, a ruling family who moved into Orissa from central India around 900.[71] They ruled this area known as interior Tosala from the town of Binka on the Mahānadī river, and gradually extended their power into the coastal region of Orissa. A Mattamayūra ascetic named Gaganaśiva, coming from central India, built a Śiva temple at the foot of the hill at Ranipur-Jharial and left an inscription there; however, he does not appear to have had any connection with the Yoginī temple crowning the hill. There is no direct evidence to associate the Somavaṁśī rulers with the Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial. In view of the importance of Yoginī worship for royalty, one may suggest perhaps that the Somavaṁśī monarchs who had recently migrated into Orissa, built a temple dedicated to the Yoginīs, hoping to win their favour and thereby consolidate their dynastic position.

The centuries between 850-1200, the period of the Yoginī temples, witnesses a plurality of political power, with a continuous struggle for supremacy between a number of independnent kindgoms. In an atmosphere of political flux and changing loyalties, one can visualize the royal devotee assigning importance to the cult of the Yoginīs who promised him success in military campaigns. We have seen that while the Yoginī temples at Bheraghat, Shahdol, Ranipur-Jharial and Hirapur seem to have been built by different patrons, most other extant Yoginī temples, some eight in number, were constructed in territories under Candella rule. Candella patronage may well have been a factor of significance in encouraging and supporting the cult of the Yoginīs, and in giving an added impetus to its spread and popularity.

The tantric mode of worship was of great importance during these centuries. Whether it was the Kaulas visualising Kula (Pārvatī) and Akula (Śiva), the Kāpālikas adoring Bhairava, or the Yoginī Kaulas propitiating the Yoginīs, the manner of worship was closely parallel. Contemporary literature including Rājaśekhara's *Karpūramañjarī*, Krishnamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara,* refers to the practices of the Kaula and Kāpālika sects, often caricaturising their followers. The absence of any literary mention of the Yoginī cult can only mean that the Yoginī Kaulas were an even more esoteric sect who maintained a greater veil of secrecy. It appears that it is not without reason that the Yoginī cult refers to itself in tantras as "The secret cult which is the most secret among the secret doctrines", *(rahasyātirahasyānām rahasyo ayam)*,[72] or as "A well guarded, hidden secret that has not so far been divulged" *(atyantagopitam aprakāśyam surakṣitam)*.[73]

5. Sixty-Four Yoginī Temples in Orissa

Orissa contains two temples of the sixty-four Yoginīs. Separated by a distance of about two hundred miles, one is at Hirapur near Bhubanesvar and the other at Ranipur-Jharial deep in the interior and bordering on Madhya Pradesh. The two temples are united by one common factor that sets them apart from all other Yoginī temples: neither includes the Mātṛkās among its Yoginīs. Orissa has several important and independent shrines of the seven and eight Mothers, many of which contain figures of life-size proportions, and at least one had gigantic images, nearly twenty feet high.[1] Perhaps because the Mātṛkās were of such major significance in Orissa, they were not included among the Yoginīs. Both Orissan shrines contain exactly sixty-four figures and both have a small central pavilion housing an image of Śiva. The Yoginīs at Ranipur-Jharial and Hirapur have been described individually, the one by Cunningham in his report of the 1870s[2] and the other in an article by Kedarnath Mahapatra.[3] More recently, Fabri, in his book on Orissan art allocated a chapter to a discussion of these two Yoginī temples, highlighting our continuing unfamiliarity with and ignorance of the subject.[4]

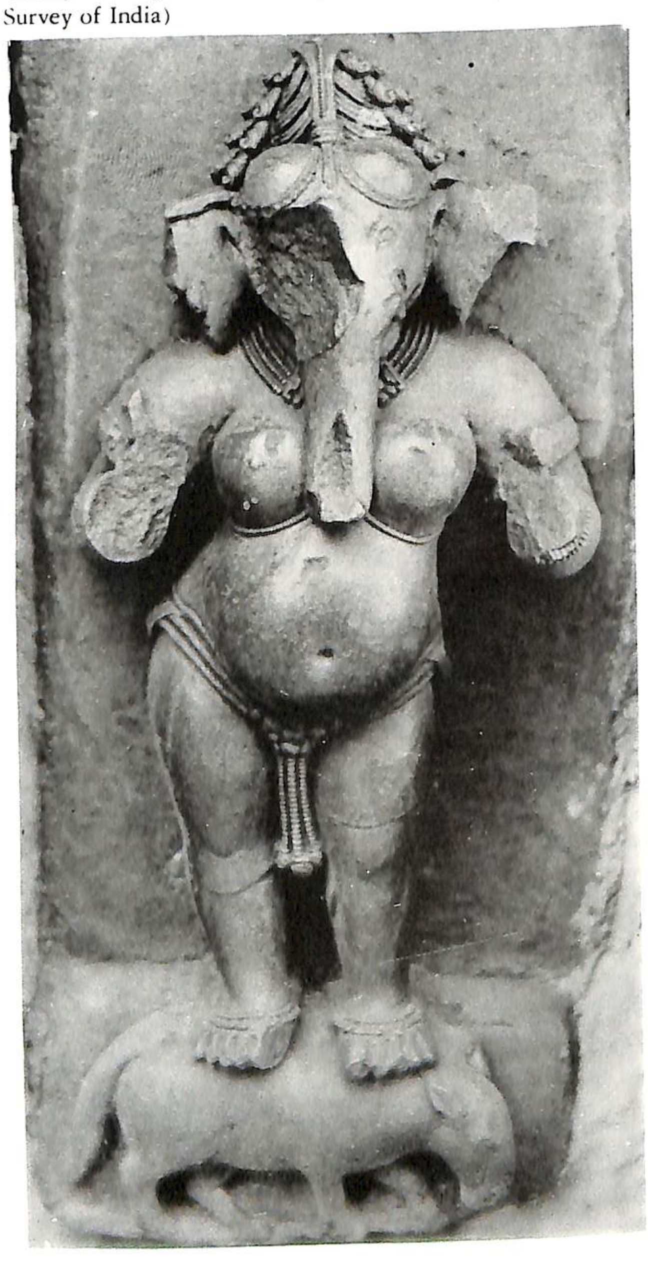
Contemporary Orissa retains no memories of the significance of its Yoginīs and offers no clues to their names. A perusal of Orissan manuscripts has revealed only one text, the 15th century *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* of Sarala Dasa that refers to Yoginīs.[5] The *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* is based on the well-known story of Caṇḍī or Durgā killing Mahiṣāsura, the demon in buffalo form. Sarala Dasa's Caṇḍī produced from her own body innumerable female soldiers who were so excessively fond of flesh, blood, bone and marrow that they continually fought and killed demons whom they then consumed. Sarala Dasa was a special devotee of the godess Saralā, and he tells us that numerous goats, rams and buffaloes were sacrificed each day in the worship of Saralā to keep her in good humour with offerings of the blood and flesh of these animals. In 15th century Orissa, it would seem that the worship of the Goddess involved much bloodshed. The *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* relates how the Yoginīs were formed from various parts of the body of Caṇḍī and of how the goddess gave them mounts sent by the gods, finally enumerating the names of the sixty-four Yoginīs (See Appendix I). Sarala Dasa's list includes the names of six Mātṛkās-Brāhmāyaṇī (Brāhmī) Nārāyaṇī (Vaiṣṇavī), Indrāyaṇī (Indrāṇī), Rudrāyaṇī (Maheśvarī), Vārāhī and Cāmuṇḍā-with only Kaumārī missing. In describing the creation of the Yoginīs, details are given of only forty-six and we are told that the remaining were created in like manner. Similarly in the case of the *vāhanas,* only thirty are specified and the author is silent regarding the others. The names in the three different lists—those of the creation of the Yoginīs, their *vāhanas* and their names—differ marginally, the first two lists including some names that do not occur in the final list of sixty-four Yoginīs.

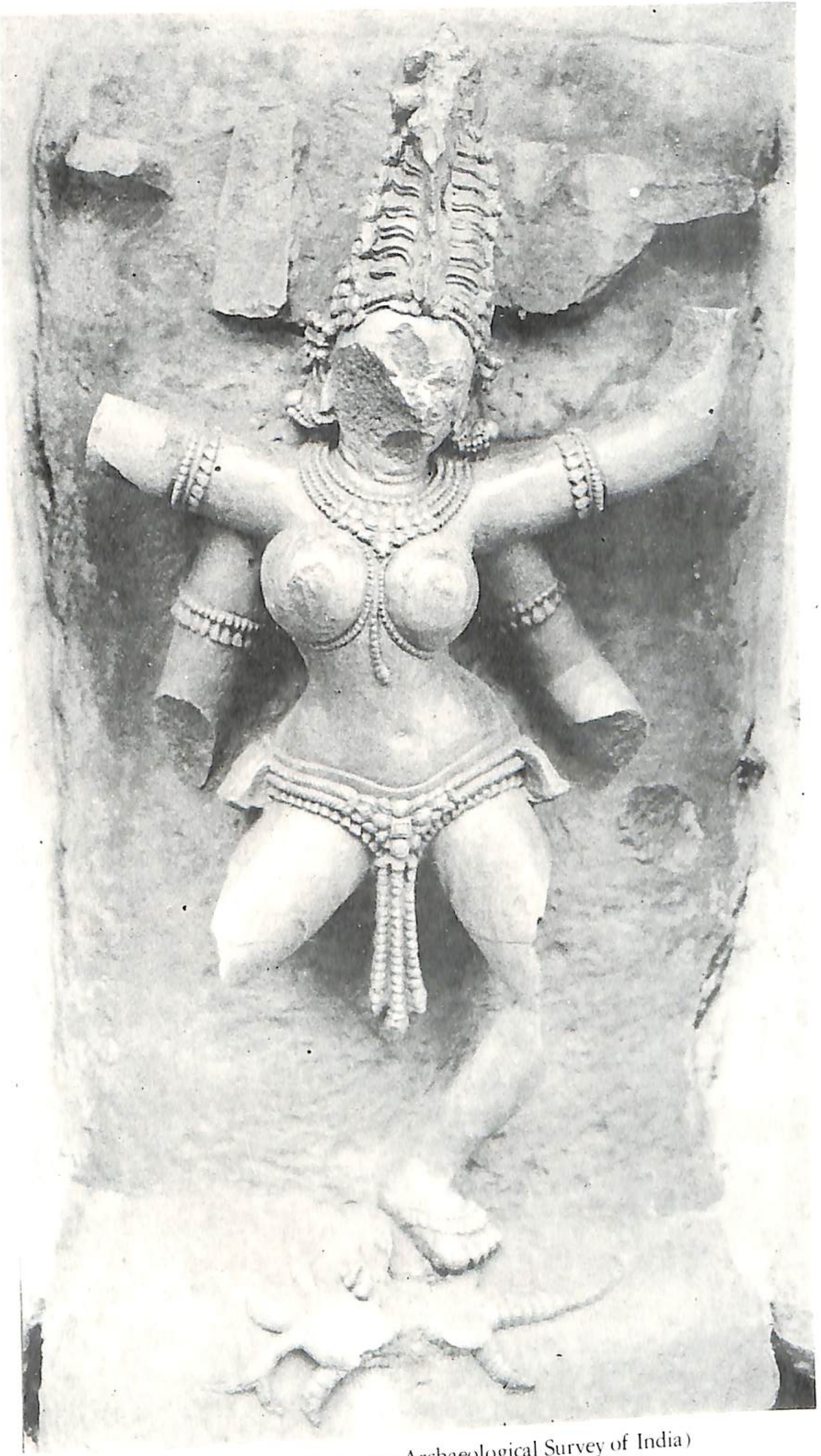
In 15th century Orissa, it is clear that the Mātṛkās were regarded as Yoginīs and that the sixty-four Yoginīs were believed to owe their origin to Devī from whom they had emerged. Their divine status is reaffirmed through the fact that Devī assigned to them various mounts sent by the gods. Curiously, Sarala Dasa does not seem to have been familiar with either of Orissa's Yoginī temples, neither of which include Mātṛkās; at best he may have heard of their existence. If the sixty-four Yoginīs of the Hirapur temple were still being worshipped in the 15th century, Sarala Dasa seems unaware of it. Among the *vāhanas* listed in his text are the swan, Garuḍa, Sampātī (Garuḍa's brother), the owl, bear, tiger and the leopard, none of which are to be seen at Hirapur. Likewise, some of the more striking mounts sculpted below the Yoginīs at Hirapur are not mentioned in Sarala Dasa's list. These include the fish, parrot, turtle, frog (occurs twice), snake, decapitated male head, an archer and a rat (occurs more than once). If Sarala Dasa had been familiar with Hirapur, it is inconceivable that his list of *vāhanas* would not agree more closely with those carved at that shrine.

A similar comment could be made about the Yoginīs themselves. Two Yoginīs at Hirapur whose identity seems clear, fail to find mention in the *Caṇḍī Purāṇa.* The first is the elephant-headed Yoginī (No. 38), standing on a donkey, who could be a version of Gaṇeśānī or Vaināyakī, although in the absence of the typical attributes of Ganeśa, it seems safer to call her Gajānanā (Elephant-headed). The second Yoginī seems to be Agni's śakti Āgneyī, since she is depicted with a backdrop of flames and has a ram as her mount. Neither Yoginī finds a place in Sarala Dasa's lists. The attempt to identify Yoginīs from the *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* among the Hirapur images is not successful either. Hirapur's four-armed Yoginī No. 40, standing on a scorpion, could be Abhayā or Virajā, to both of whom the text assigns a scorpion *vāhana.* Yoginī No. 62 standing on a deer could be Chāyā, Māyā, Tripurā or Mahāmāyā, all of whom Sarala Dasa places on a deer. Yoginī No. 44 standing on a heraldic lion could be Ghatavarī or Vimalā, while Yoginī No. 13 on a boar could be Ugratārā or Bahuti. It is evident that Sarala Dasa's text does not allow a positive identification of the Hirapur Yoginīs, nor indeed of those from Ranipur-Jharial. The additional fact that the *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* includes the Mātṛkās as Yoginīs, while the two Orissan temples exclude them, makes it evident that the text cannot help us in our studies.

We must assume that Sarala Dasa obtained his information on the Yoginīs, not from the temples that existed around him, but from earlier lost texts in the orthodox tradition. It would be possible, of course, to use alternate sources and postulate for instance that Hirapur's Yoginī No. 16 who stands on a fish is Huṅkārī, mentioned by Hemadri and others as part of a Mātṛkā-exclusive Yoginī tradition (See Appendix II). But unless we know

Vaināyakī Yoginī from Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

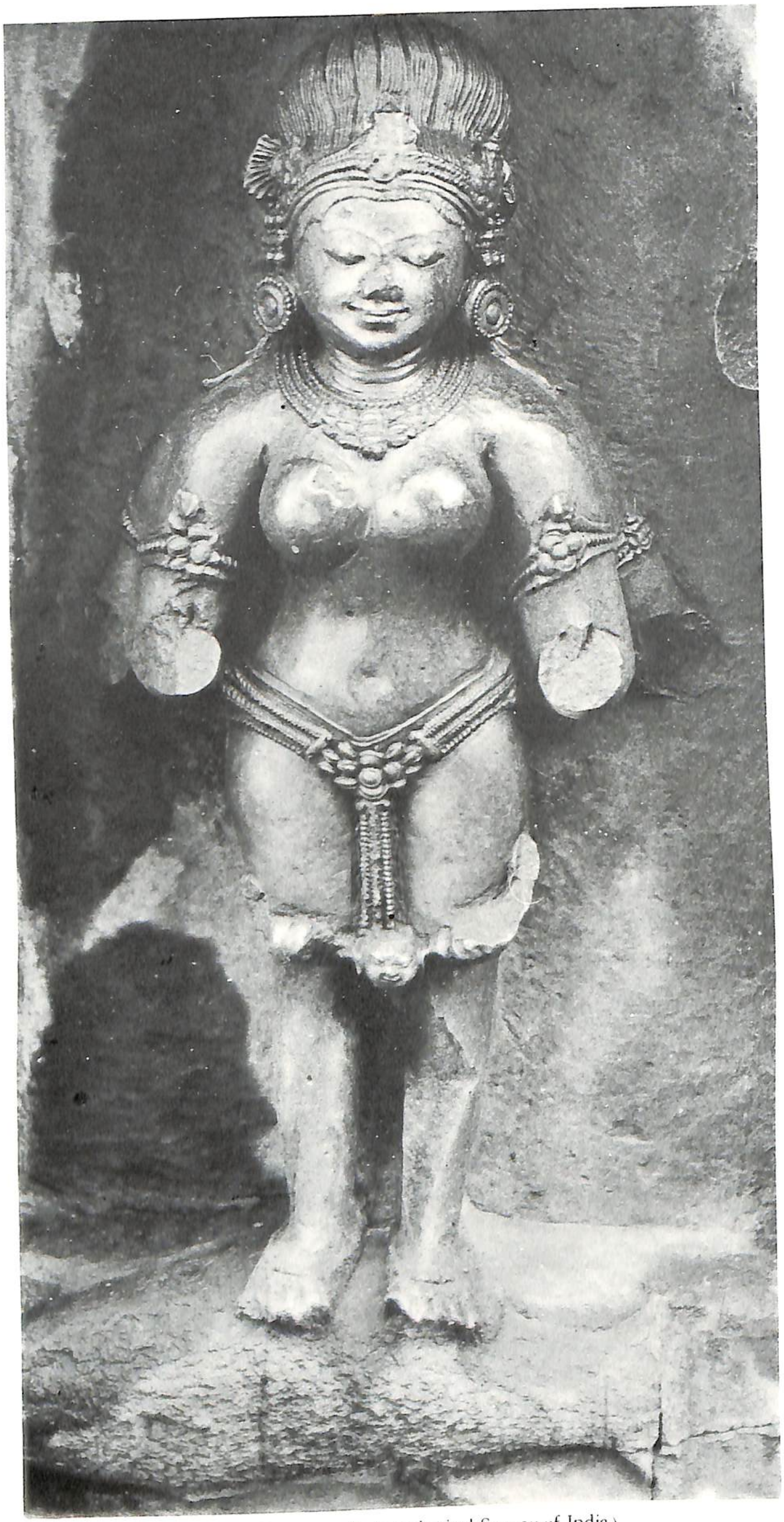




Yoginī on scorpion, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

that a particular tradition was prevalent in a given area, it would be presumptious to use such texts indiscriminately to identify the Yoginīs.

It is of interest to note that sixteen of Sarala Dasa's Yoginīs are still worshipped in separate temples as independent goddesses and his Yoginī Vaseli is a deity enshrined in almost every Oriya village (See Appendix I). The shrines of Hirapur and Ranipur-Jharial probably present us with groups of goddesses who were worhsipped in these two widely separated areas of Orissa during the 7th and 8th centuries. These would have been village deities concerned only with day to day matters like love and hate, fertility and childbirth, snake bites and disease. Tantrism took these simple



Yoginī on a fish, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

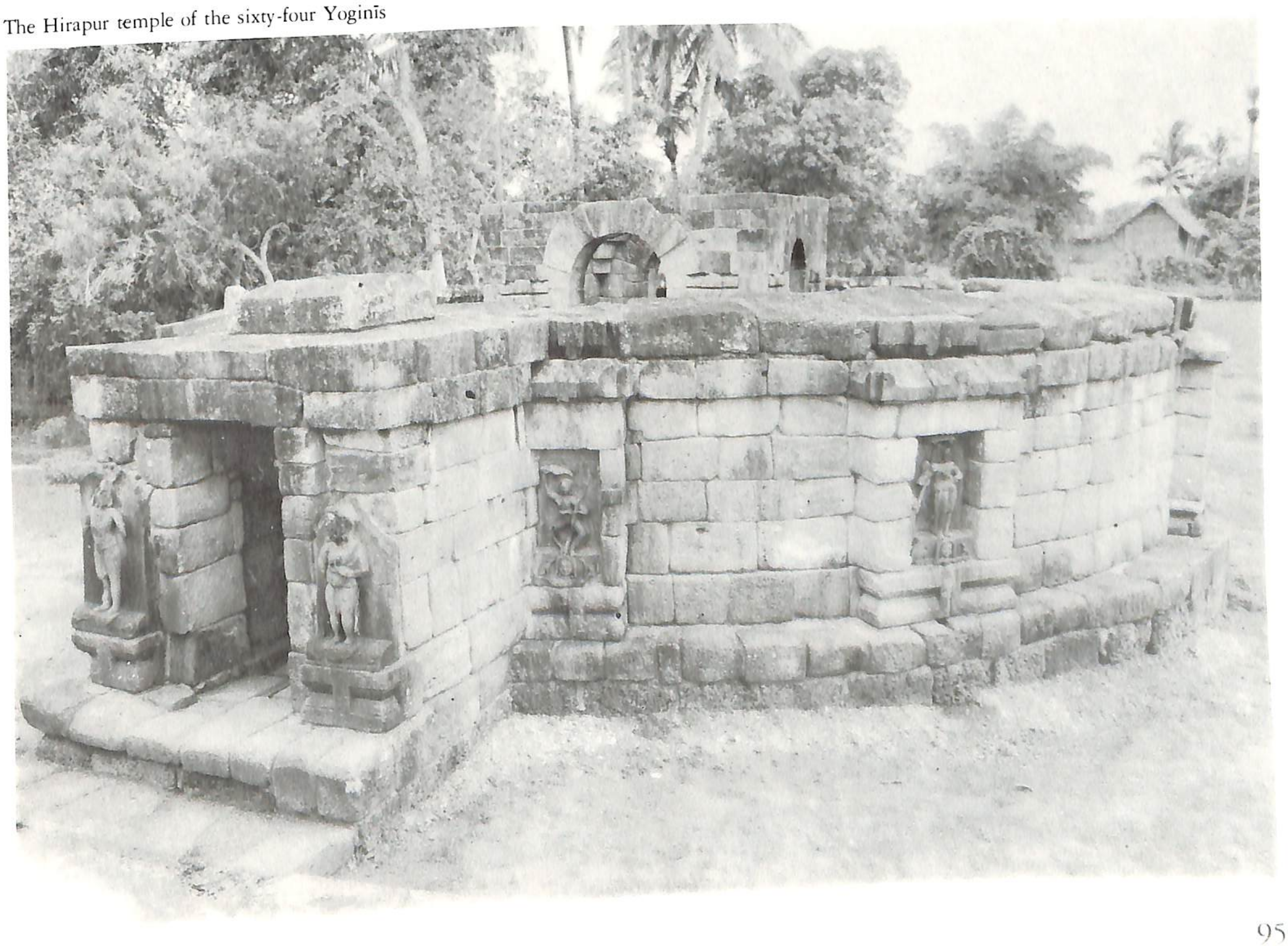
grāma devatās and transformed them into potent groups of sixty-four Yoginīs whose worship leads to the acquisition of a variety of magical powers. Each Yoginī temple reflects then a different and localised tradition of Yoginīs and it would be fruitless to seek the specific names and rituals associated with each temple.

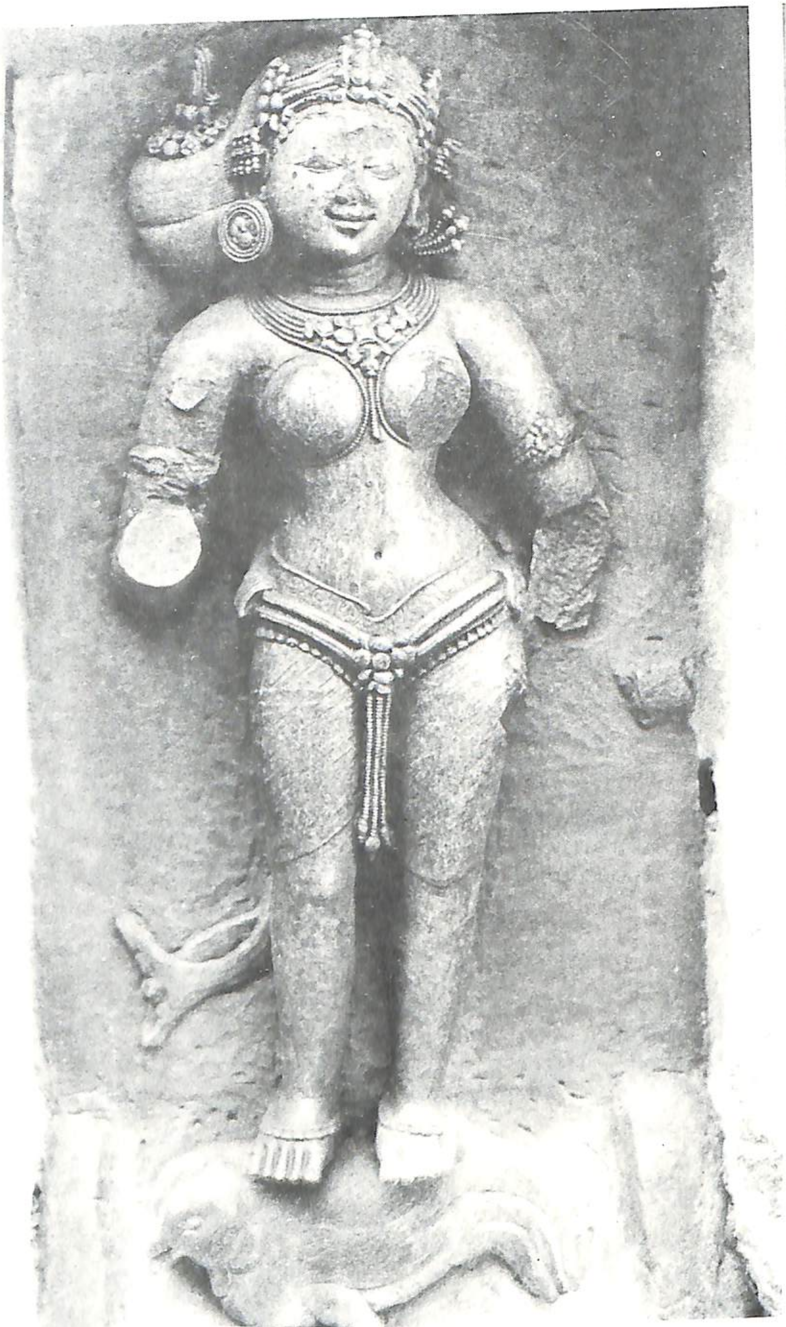
The Hirapur Temple

Lying in the midst of paddy fields barely eight miles from the temple town of Bhubanesvar, is the Yoginī temple of Hirapur, surrounded for years with such a veil of secrecy that its existence became public knowledge only in the year 1953. Hirapur is the smallest of all Yoginī temples and measures only thirty feet in diameter, with stone walls barely eight feet high. Yet the atmosphere that exists within this temple is quite awe-inspiring. This miniature circle conveys an impression of overwhelming power and seems to transmit the potency and dynamic strength of its sixty-four Yoginīs.

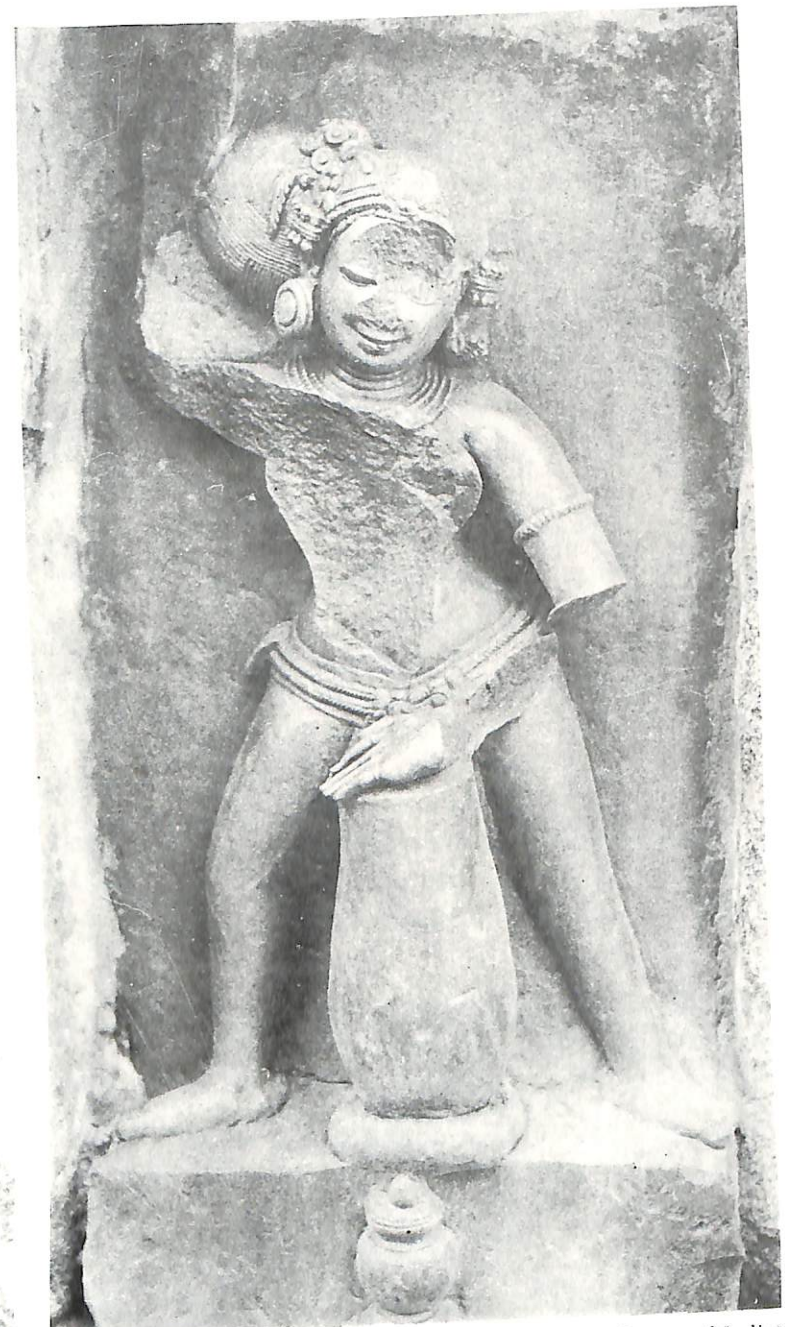
The Hirapur temple is built of coarse sandstone blocks with laterite in its foundation, while its Yoginīs are carved from fine-grained grey chlorite. The inner walls of this circular temple have sixty niches with all sixty Yoginīs still in position. The small central pavilion, clumsily reconstructed in recent years, has eight niches, four with images of the remaining four of the sixty-four Yoginīs, and four housing images of four Bhairavas. In the centre of this shrine-pavilion stood an image of Śiva which, regrettably was stolen soon after the discovery of the temple. The Yoginī images are about two feet in height and the chlorite slabs from which they have been carved are tightly wedged into the niches prepared for them. Each Yoginī niche has been treated as a miniature shrine, with base moulding below and a roof treatment above, containing a

The Hirapur temple of the sixty-four Yoginīs





Yoginī on bird, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



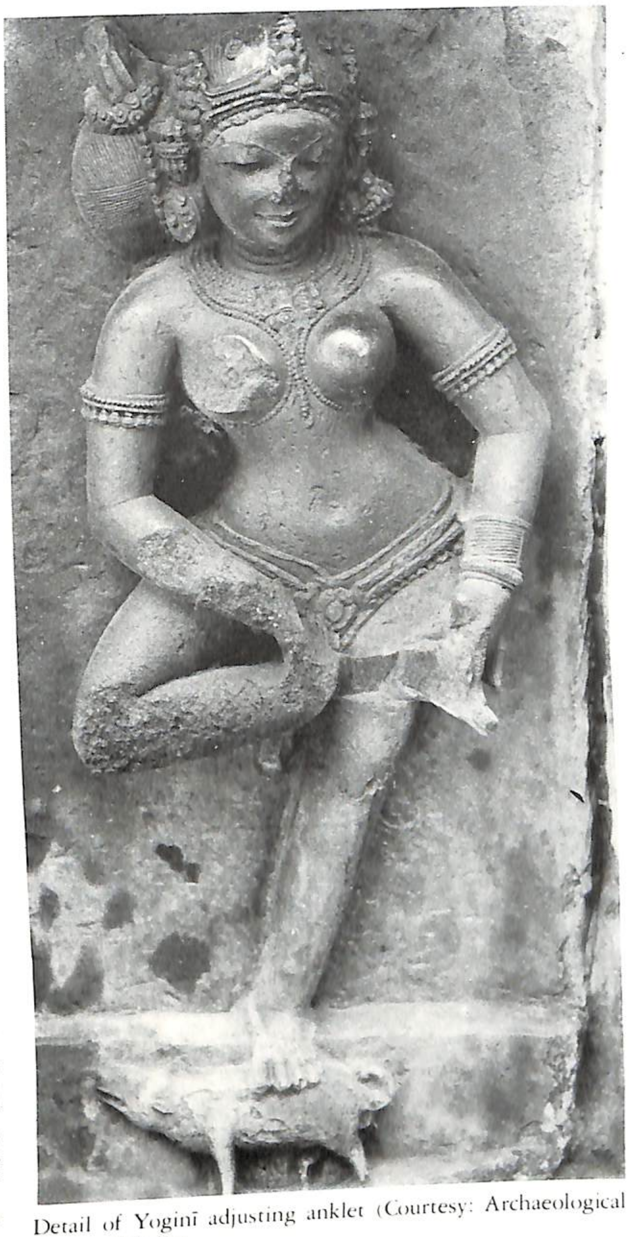
Yoginī with drum, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

relief carving of an arch such as is seen on all Orissan temples. The sandstone is badly worn and while the details are blurred, the general outlines are still discernable.

The Hirapur Yoginīs are extraordinarily beautiful figures with exquisite features and sensuously formed bodies. They are standing images, all delightfully poised with the soft, rounded thighs extolled in poetry as comparable to the smooth stalks of the banana palm. Faces are delicately carved, often with a gentle smile that further enhances their beauty, while the fact that some of the Yoginīs have animal heads does not detract from their attractiveness. Jewelled girdles placed low on their hips hold a skirt that is indicated only by a line along their ankles, and they wear elaborate ornaments of various types. There is great variety in hairstyles which include large ornamented chignons placed to one side of the head, hair piled up on the crown, and small tight curls arranged neatly on the head. Most of the Yoginīs have two arms (sixteen have four arms and one has eight) and none has haloes or attendant figures, the goddess being carved against a plain slab of stone, with her mount at her feet. They seem, in fact, to be more in the nature of studies of beautiful women.

A gentle maiden adjusting an anklet, exudes femininity and sensuality with her softly curved stomach, wide hips and high rounded breasts. Her slim, lithe figure is admirably portrayed, while her eyes, eyebrows and lips have delicate lines. There is little to indicate her divinity and indeed, the same may be said of the Diana-like huntress maiden, wielding bow and arrow, and endowed by the sculptor with infinite grace. Of equal appeal is a four-armed graceful celestial, balancing on two wheels placed on the back of a mouse and holding a kettle-drum in one of her hands. There is considerable sensuality and animation in the striking horse-headed Yoginī whose animal head scarcely lessens her fascination, while the ass-headed Yoginī, quaint of face but of exquisite form, is equally captivating. The Hirapur Yoginīs are truly bewitching figures.

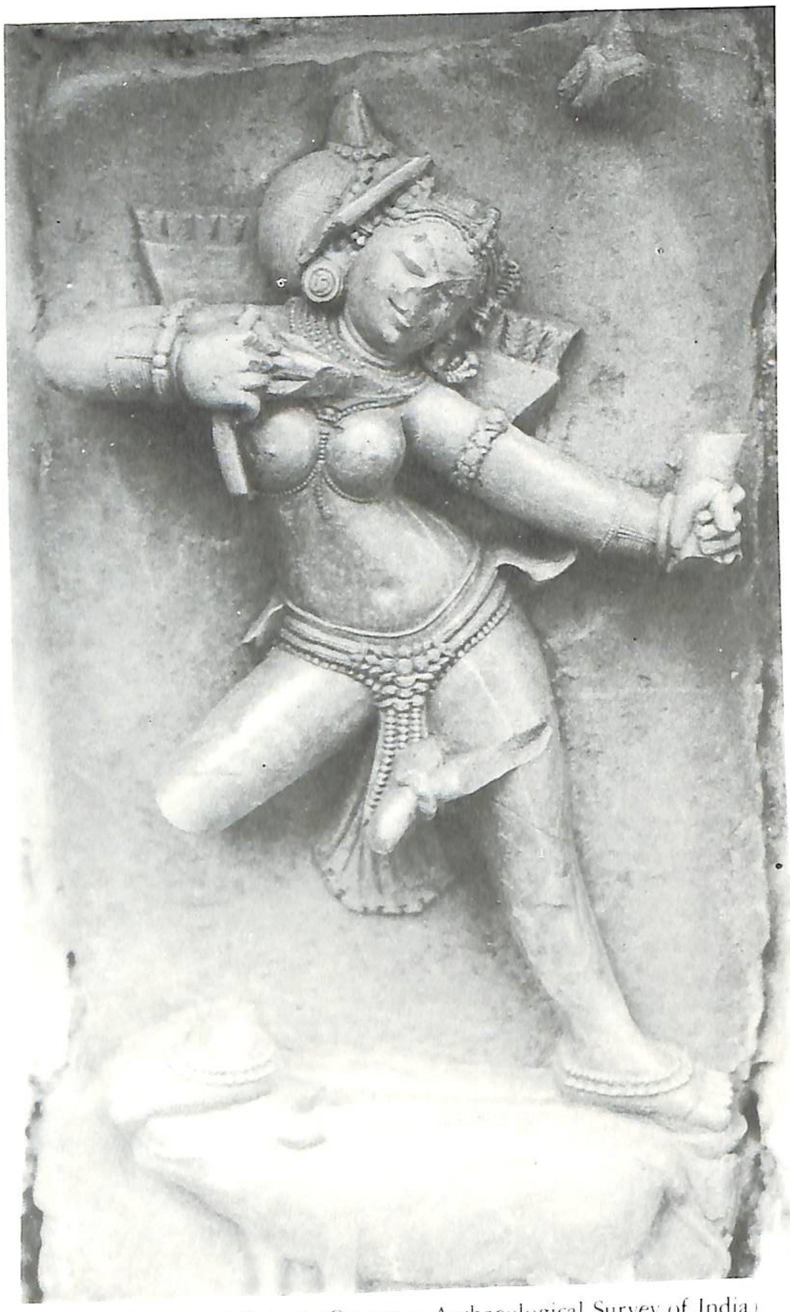
An attempt to locate the Mātṛkās at the Hirapur temple proves unsuccessful. For instance, it is tempting to identify the sole Yoginī with an elephant as Indrāṇī since that animal is her mount. But instead of the *vajra* (thunderbolt) this graceful figure (No. 3) holds a skull-cup to her lips. She could be the Yoginī Surāpriyā drinking wine, or Rudhirapāyinī drinking blood, or Kapālinī (She of the skull-cup bowl); but she is not Indrāyaṇī and we are forced to conclude that Hirapur has no Indrāyaṇī. Brahmayāṇī and Nārāyaṇī are absent, and Vārāhī's familiar sow face and her accompanying *vāhana* of boar or buffalo is not to be seen among the group. Saralā Dāsa, incidentally, assigns Vārāhī a black dog as mount. Cāmuṇḍā with her easily discernible iconography is not present either. The only Cāmuṇḍā-like skeletal figure with sunken stomach and pendulous breasts is Yoginī No. 56 standing on an ass. Wearing a garland of skulls, she holds a severed head and a dagger in two of her hands, while her other two hands hold aloft a lion carcass. Thus,



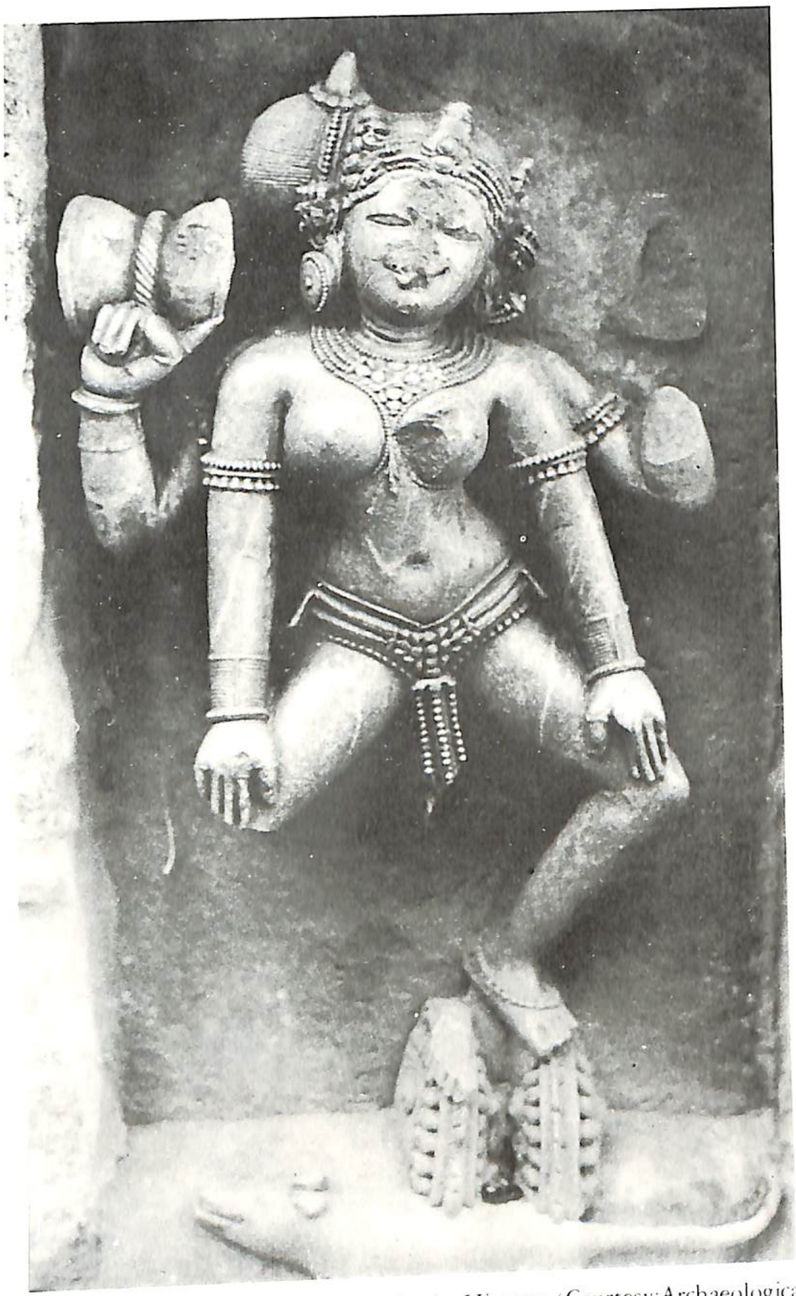
Detail of Yoginī adjusting anklet (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Yoginī adjusting anklet, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Detail of Hirapur Yoginī (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



Yoginī as huntress, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

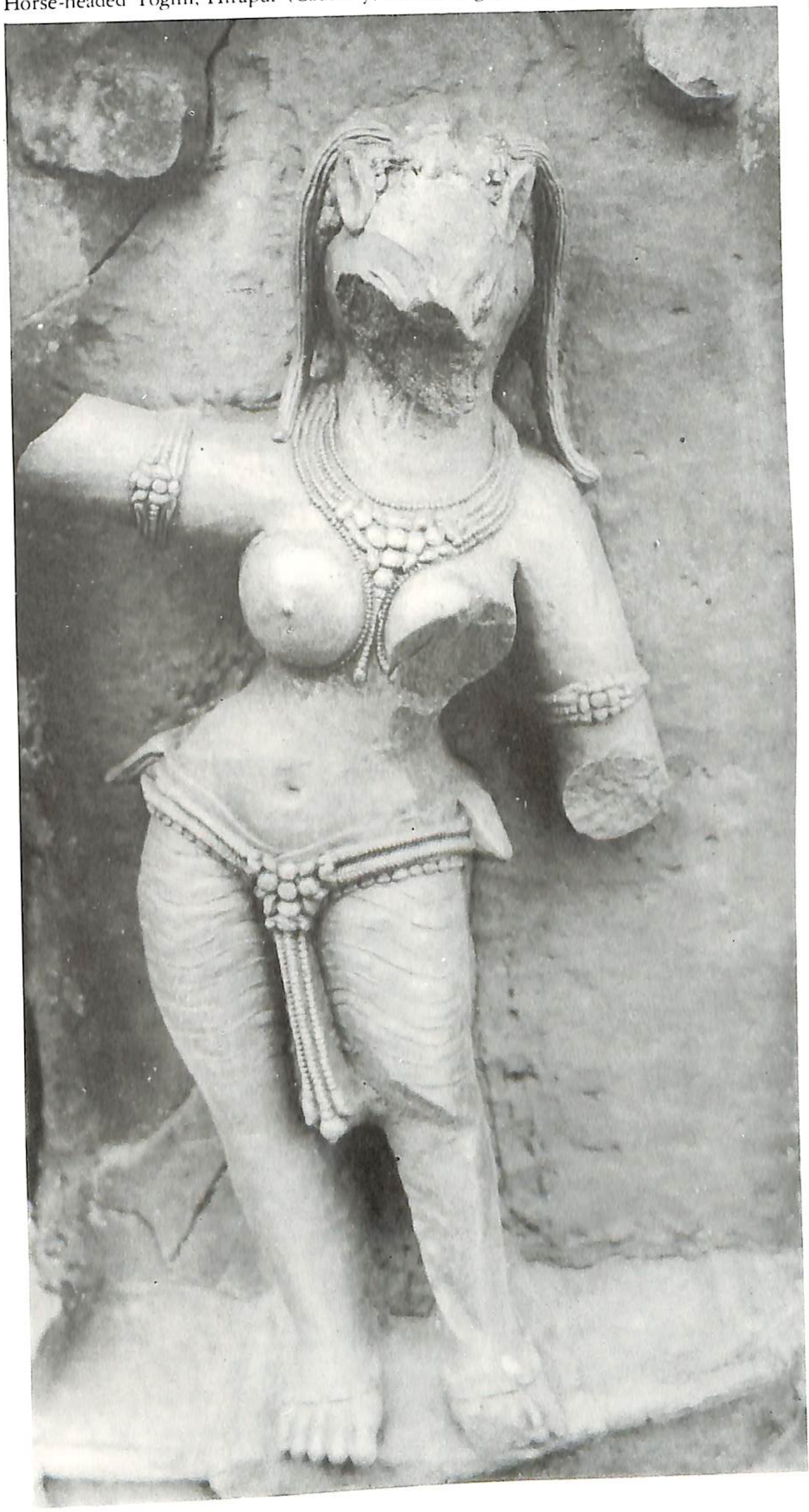


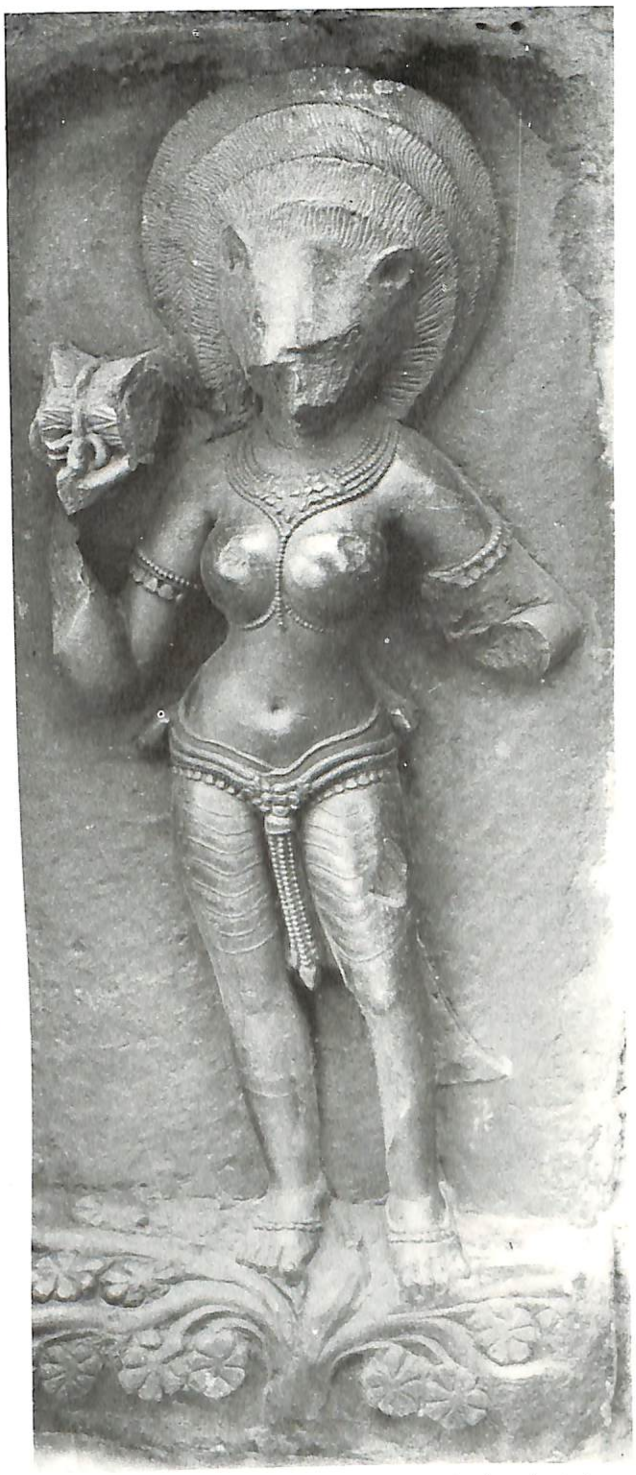
Four-armed Yoginī balancing on wheels, Hirapur (Courtesy:Archaeological Survey of India)

with only one image missing, we can say with confidence that the Yoginī temple of Hirapur excluded the Mātṛkās.

In the absence of inscriptional material and of specific textual reference to Hirapur, the best way to establish the date of this temple is by comparison with the wealth of sculptures at the nearby centre of Bhubanesvar. Because of the nearness of the site, it is not far-fetched to assume that the same workshops that produced the temples at Bhubanesvar were also responsible for the Hirapur temple. Stylistically, the Hirapur sculptures display the closest affinity with the beautiful carvings adorning the Mukteśvar temple at Bhubanesvar. This shrine is generally assigned to the end of the 9th century or to the beginning of the 10th. The sculptures at both Hirapur and Mukteśvar exhibit a similarly soft and sensitive modelling of the female form, characterised by a sense of restrained animation and quiet elegance. The details of jewellery and ornamentation form a striking contrast to the smooth, rounded planes of the almost bare body. The carvings in the Hirapur and Mukteśvar temples are more refined and rich than those in the

Horse-headed Yoginī, Hirapur (Courtesy; Archaeological Survey of India)

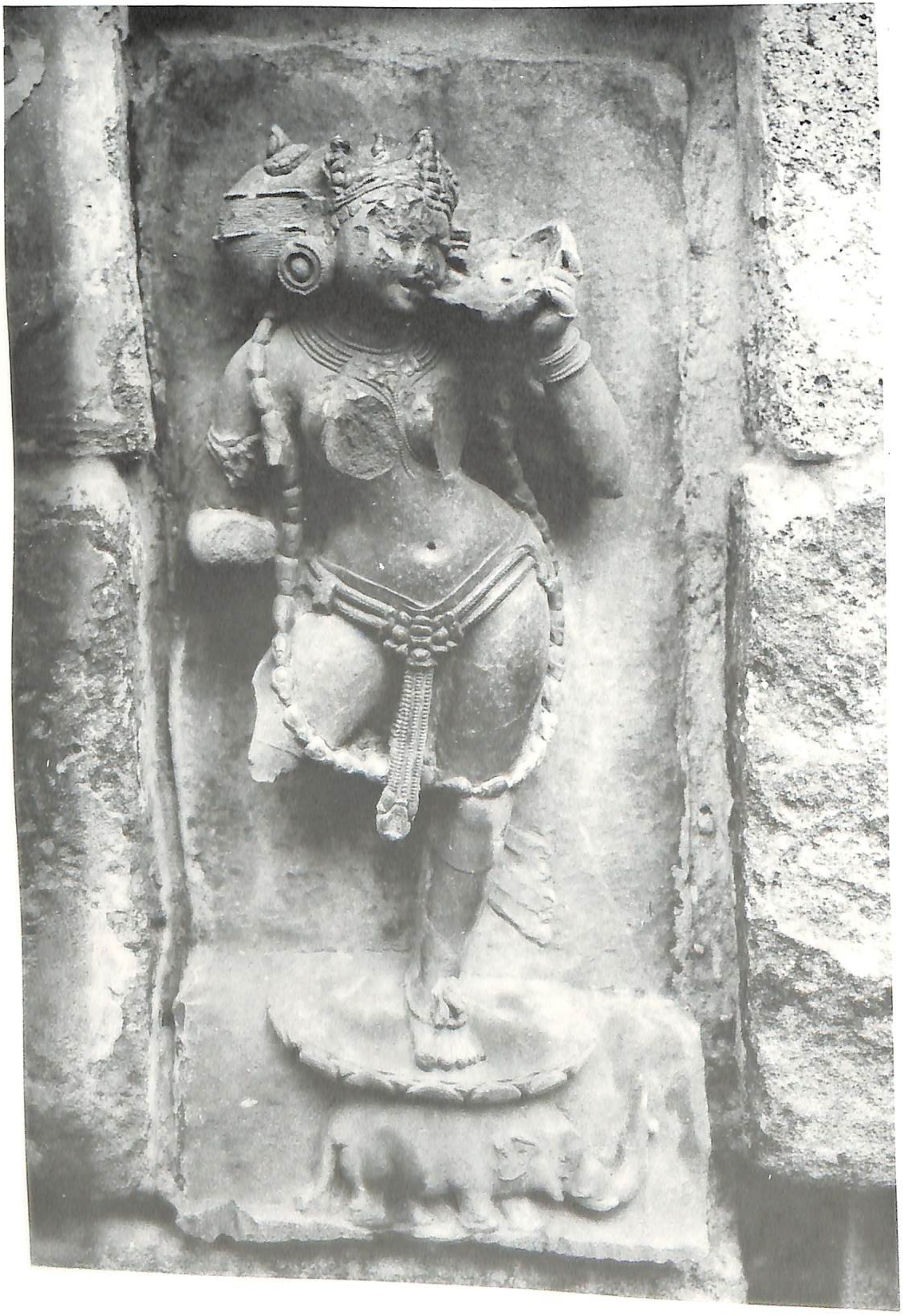


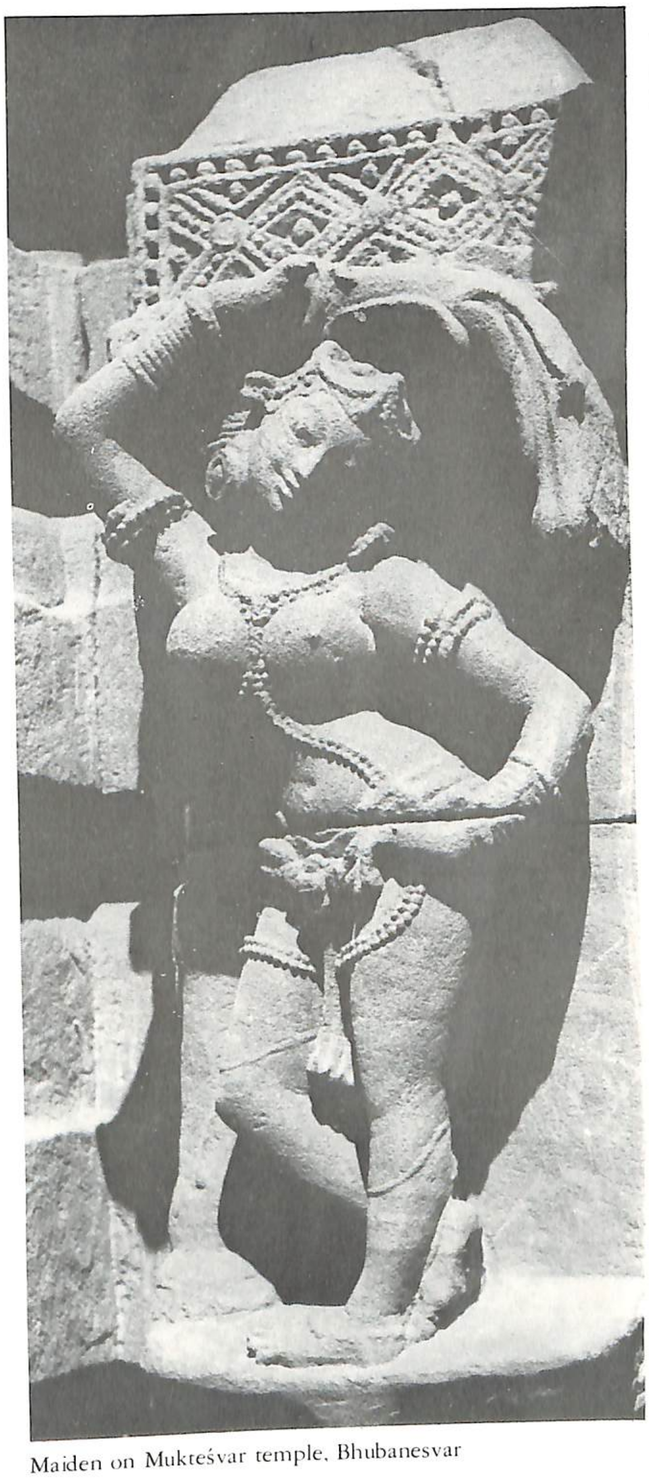


Ass-headed Yoginī, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Paraśurameśvar and the Vaital temples. On the other hand, the exaggerated figure proportions of a later date are not yet evident. We are thus inclined to suggest that the Hirapur Yoginī temple was completed by A.D. 900. Further support for such a date comes from the treatment of base mouldings under each Yoginī niche. These mouldings, though here simplified, are akin to Type III mouldings such as are seen on the Mukteśvar temple, and these, as we have shown elesewhere,[6] cannot be dated much later than A.D. 900. Hirapur, therefore, must belong to what we have described as the Culmination Phase of the early Orissan temple, a phase which dates between 850-930.[7]

Yoginī drinking from skull-cup, Hirapur (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

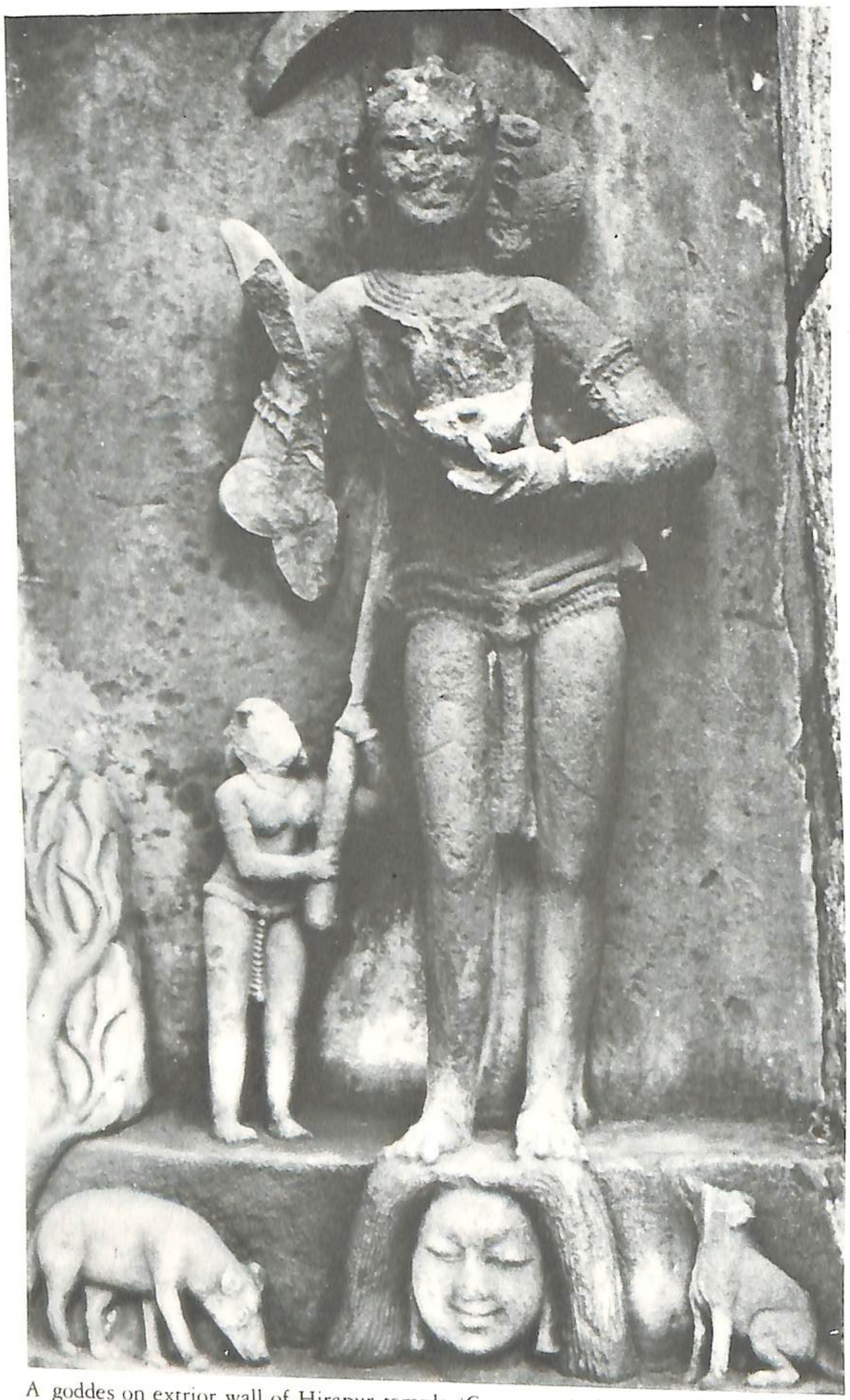




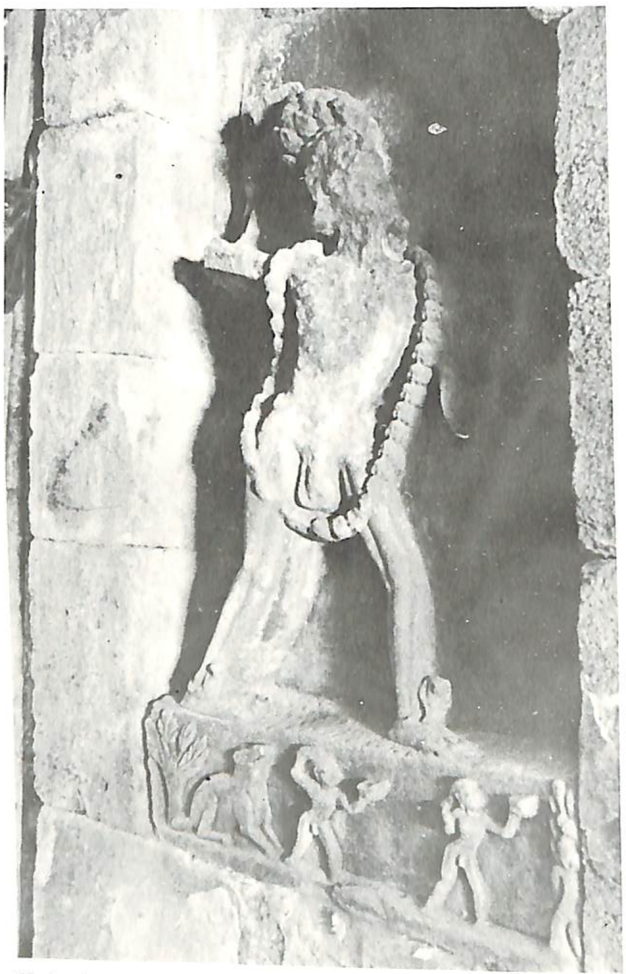
Maiden on Mukteśvar temple, Bhubanesvar

Nāginī on Mukteśvar temple, Bhubanesvar

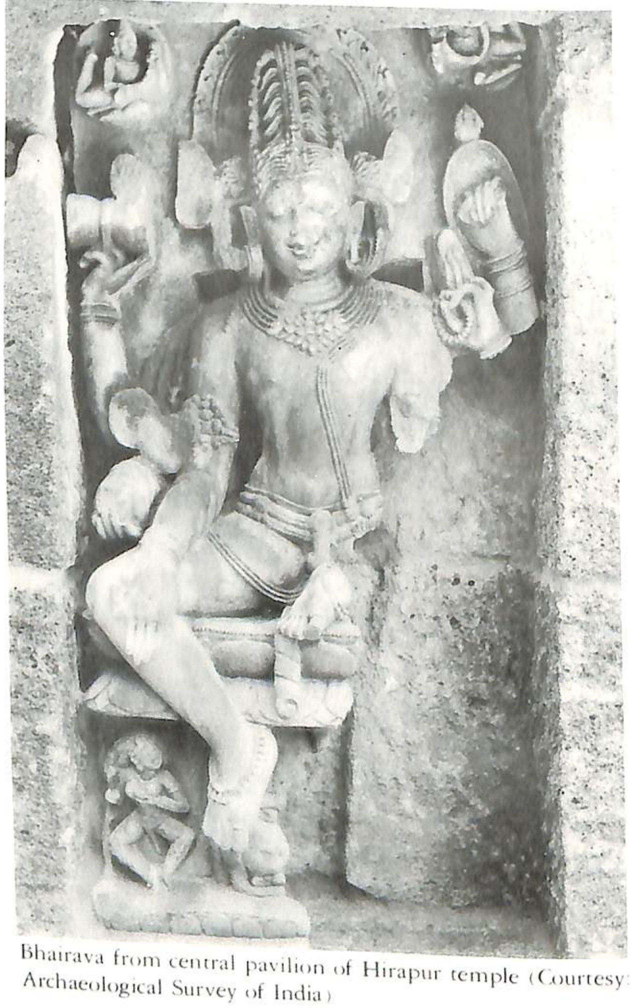
Hirapur is the only Yoginī temple to have sculptures on its outer walls, where we see nine niches each containing a sandstone female figure. Each stands upon a large severed human head, holding a curved knife or a javelin in one hand and a skull-cup in the other. Kedarnath Mahapatra who brought the temple to light, calls them Kātyāyanīs,[8] but he provides no evidence for such an identification. It seems more probable that they represent the Nine Durgās of the *caṇḍa* or fierce variety and that their function here is that of guardian deities. Another unusual feature of this temple is a projecting entranceway flanked by doorkeepers. On either side of the narrow vestibule is a skeletal male of fearsome mien, wearing a garland of skulls and snake anklets, with one figure holding a severed human head. On the pedestal below are two more similar



A goddes on extrior wall of Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



Skeletal male in vestibule of Hirapur temple



Bhairava from central pavilion of Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

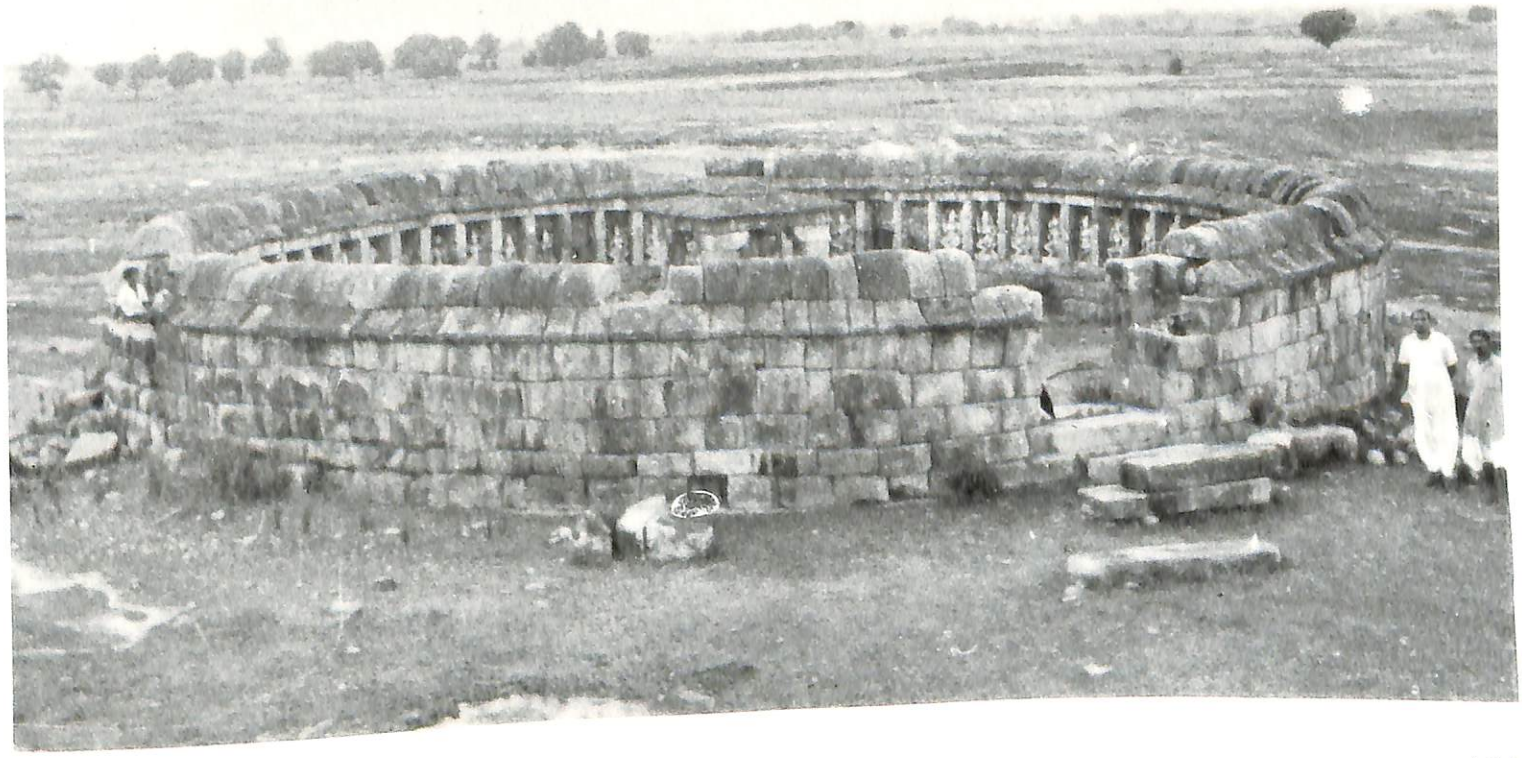
skeletal figures holding skull-cups and with jackals beside them. The entire mood is suggestive of *śava sādhanā* rites. As mentioned earlier, Hirapur also has four Bhairava images against the walls of its central shrine. One is a standing image of Ekapāda Bhairava and the other three are ten-armed seated figures, each placed on a lotus seat with a recumbent male below and a small dancing female brandishing a knife in one hand and holding a skull-cup in the other. All four Bhairavas are depicted with *ūrdhva liṅga* (erect phallus) as is the standard custom with Śaiva images in Orissa and elsewhere. It is not clear why these additional sculptures are found only on this particular Yoginī temple; perhaps Hirapur was in some manner a special shrine. In all other Yoginī temples we find only the essential elements of the circle of Yoginīs around a central shrine for Śiva as Bhairava.

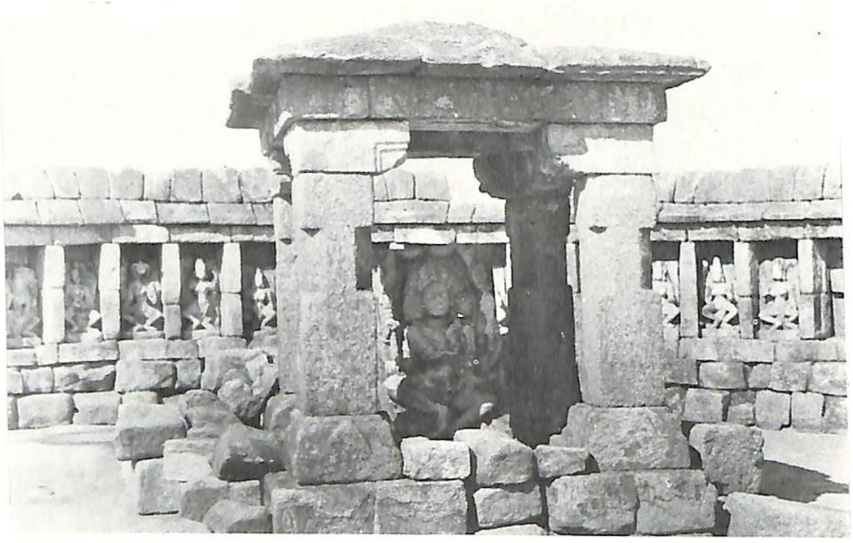
The Temple of Ranipur-Jharial

Deep in the interior of Orissa and several miles from the nearest town of Titlagadh, is a rocky outcrop between the small villages of Ranipur and Jharial. Testifying to the past importance of this site are the remains of a number of small stone temples built upon the rock, one large brick temple nearby and also a site in the vicinity that is yielding Buddhist remains. Crowning the rocky mound is the circular temple of the sixty-four Yoginīs, and at its foot is a large natural tank which, a thousand years ago, appears to have been a significant place of pilgrimage. An inscription in a temple on the embankment tells us that by bathing in the waters of this tank, known as Somatīrtha, all one's sins will be washed away.

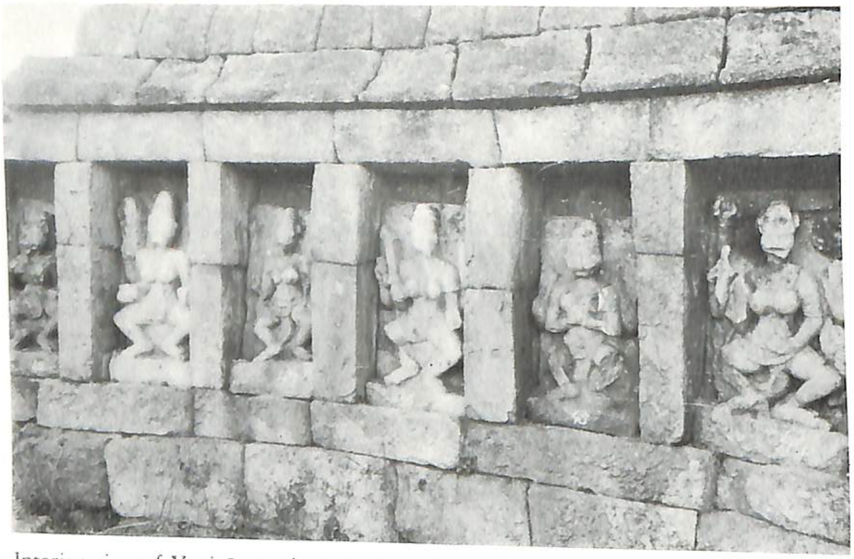
The Ranipur-Jharial Yoginī temple has a diameter of approximately fifty feet, making it more than twice the size of the Hirapur temple. The images are larger and all the Yoginīs are shown dancing, each striking an identical pose *(karaṇa)*. The positioning of the legs is basic to all Indian classical dance and is a stance assumed at the start of each set of movements; thus, the Yoginīs are poised as if ready to commence their dance. There are sixty-four niches in this temple, and at its centre, still relatively intact, is the original small roofed pavilion containing an image of dancing Śiva. The textual concept of Śiva at the centre of a circle of Yoginīs is thus followed here exactly. However, the fact that Śiva and the Yoginīs are dancing appears to be a novel iconographic arrangement. Śiva has three faces and eight arms and is shown with

Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial

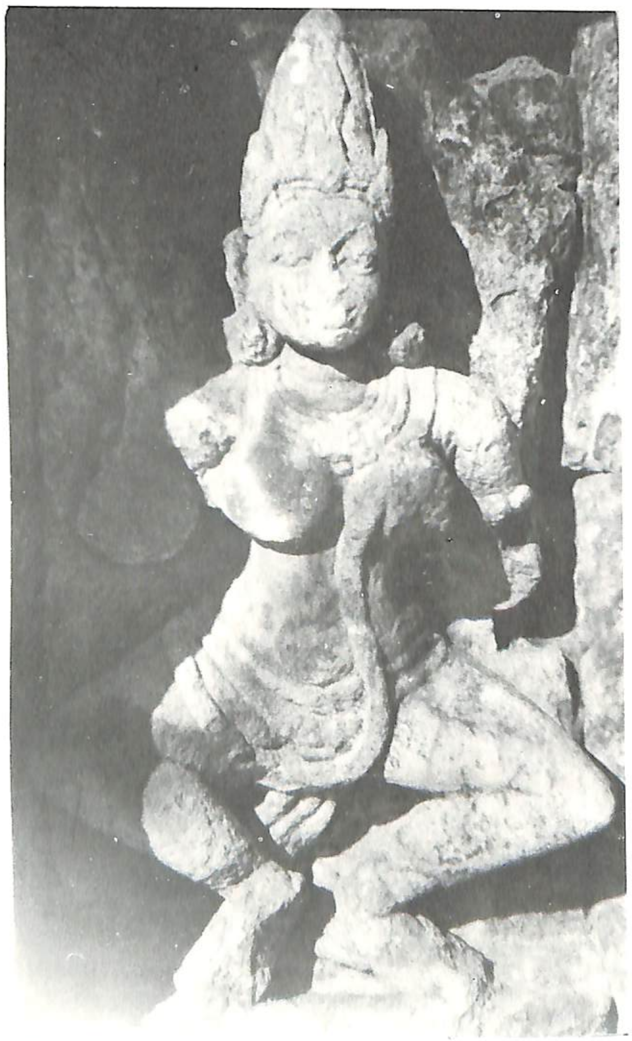




Central shrine of Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial



Interior view of Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial

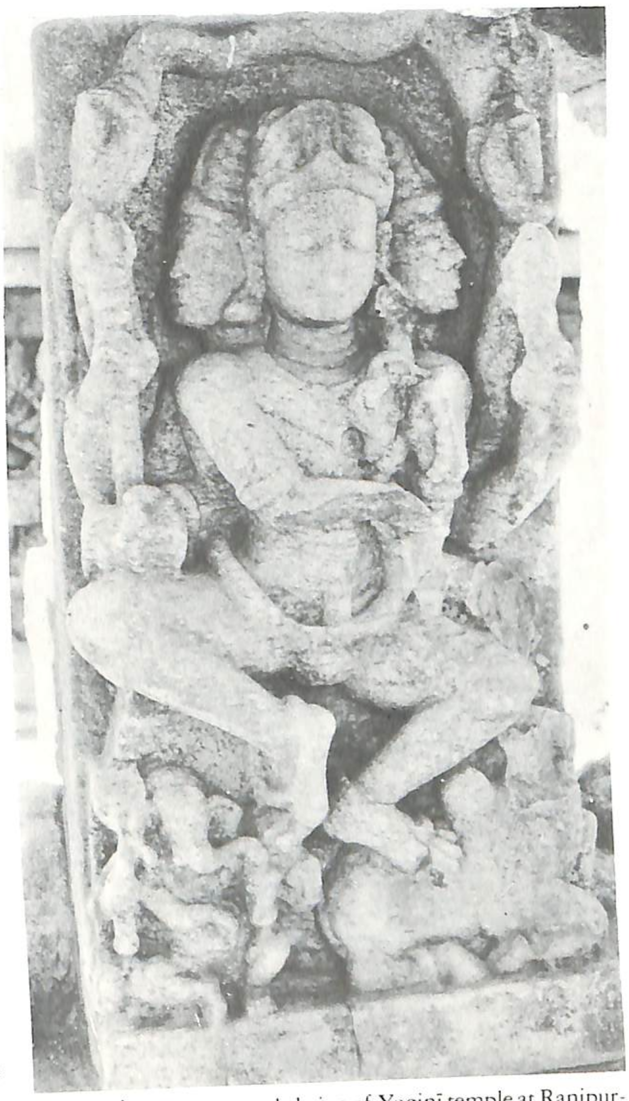


Dancing Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial

ūrdhva liṅga; Gaṇeśa and the bull Nandī are also carved along the base of the image. While the main entrance into the temple is a simple opening on the east, there appears to have once been a secondary entrance on the south. This has been neatly filled in with stone blocks similar to those used in the main structure, but this portion of the wall is still distinguishable as a later addition. The significance of this second entranceway which does not exist at Hirapur, is not clear.[9]

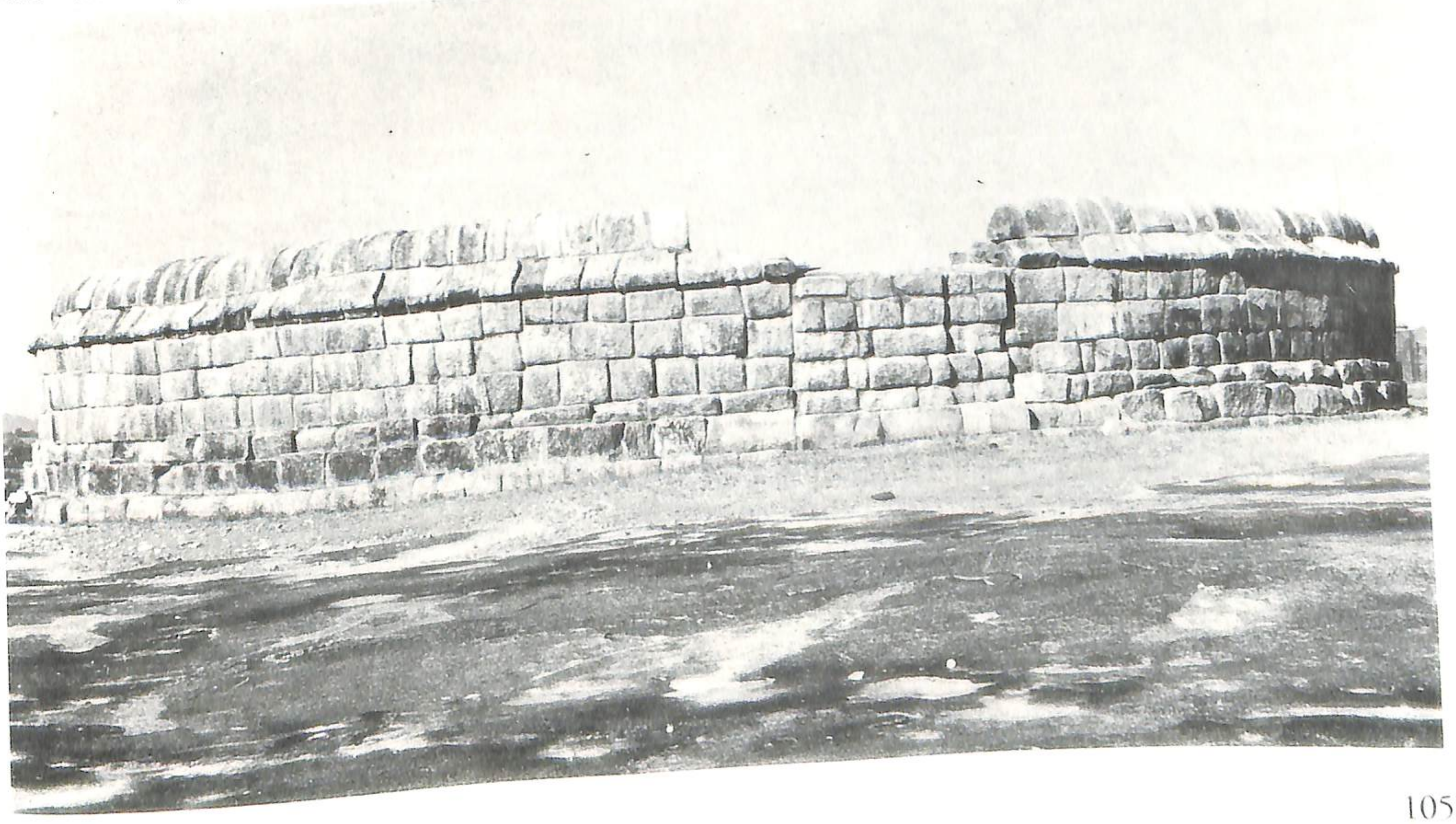
As at Hirapur, here too the Mātṛkās are not in evidence. Māheśvarī would normally be depicted holding a trident in one hand, but no less than fifteen Yoginīs at Ranipur-Jharial hold the trident. Brāhmī's attributes are a rosary and *kamaṇḍalu* (water-vessel) and she is further distinguished by three faces. No single Yoginī in this temple holds both the rosary and the *kamaṇḍalu*, while the two Yoginīs depicted with three faces (Nos. 1 and 12) hold a trident. There is no sign of skeletal Cāmuṇḍā or sow-faced Vārāhī, nor of Vaiṣṇavī, Aindrī or Kaumārī. It seems that at Ranipur-Jharial, as at Hirapur, we see a tradition that differentiated between the Mātṛkās and Yoginīs. While it would be possible to argue that the Mātṛkās may be accounted for among the fifteen missing images, this argument is not entirely convincing. It is unfortunate that the *vāhanas* of these Yoginīs, once carved in shallow relief against their pedestals, are completely defaced except in the case of four of the images. As at Hirapur, there are no haloes and no attendant figures either, the Yoginīs being carved against plain slabs of stone.

Ranipur-Jharial reveals a larger proportion of animal-headed Yoginīs than Hirapur, with fourteen such heads being clearly distinguishable. Among the several such striking Yoginīs is one with the head of a cat (No. 16), reminiscent of the Yoginīs with names like Biḍālīdevī and Mārjārī (both words meaning cat) and discussed in Appendix II. In two hands, this goddess holds a club and sword, in a third a skull-cup and with the fourth a piece of flesh which she is eating. Six-armed Yoginī No. 21 seems to have the face of leopard. More interesting is the fact that with one of her left hands she holds a human corpse by its legs, which is suggestive of the *śava sādhanā* rites considered earlier. Yoginī No. 22 is elephant-headed Gajānanā or possibly Vaināyakī since in one of her four hands is the *paraśu* or battleaxe associated with Gaṇeśa. Yoginī No. 23 wearing a crown formed of a coiled snake, seems to be sow-faced, but she does not have the explicit iconographic features of Vārāhī. Two hands hold a rosary and a club, while the other two are placed one upon the other in front of her, reminiscent of the pose adopted by a dancer about to commence the next series of dance movements. Yoginī No. 28 appears to be snake-faced (Sarpāsyā) and holds a trident in one of her four hands. The horse-headed Yoginī is seen here too (No. 44), holding a trident in one upper hand and grasping, with both lower hands, a severed head by its hair. The buffalo-headed Yoginī and the goddess with the antelope head are both arresting figures.



Dancing Śiva from central shrine of Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial

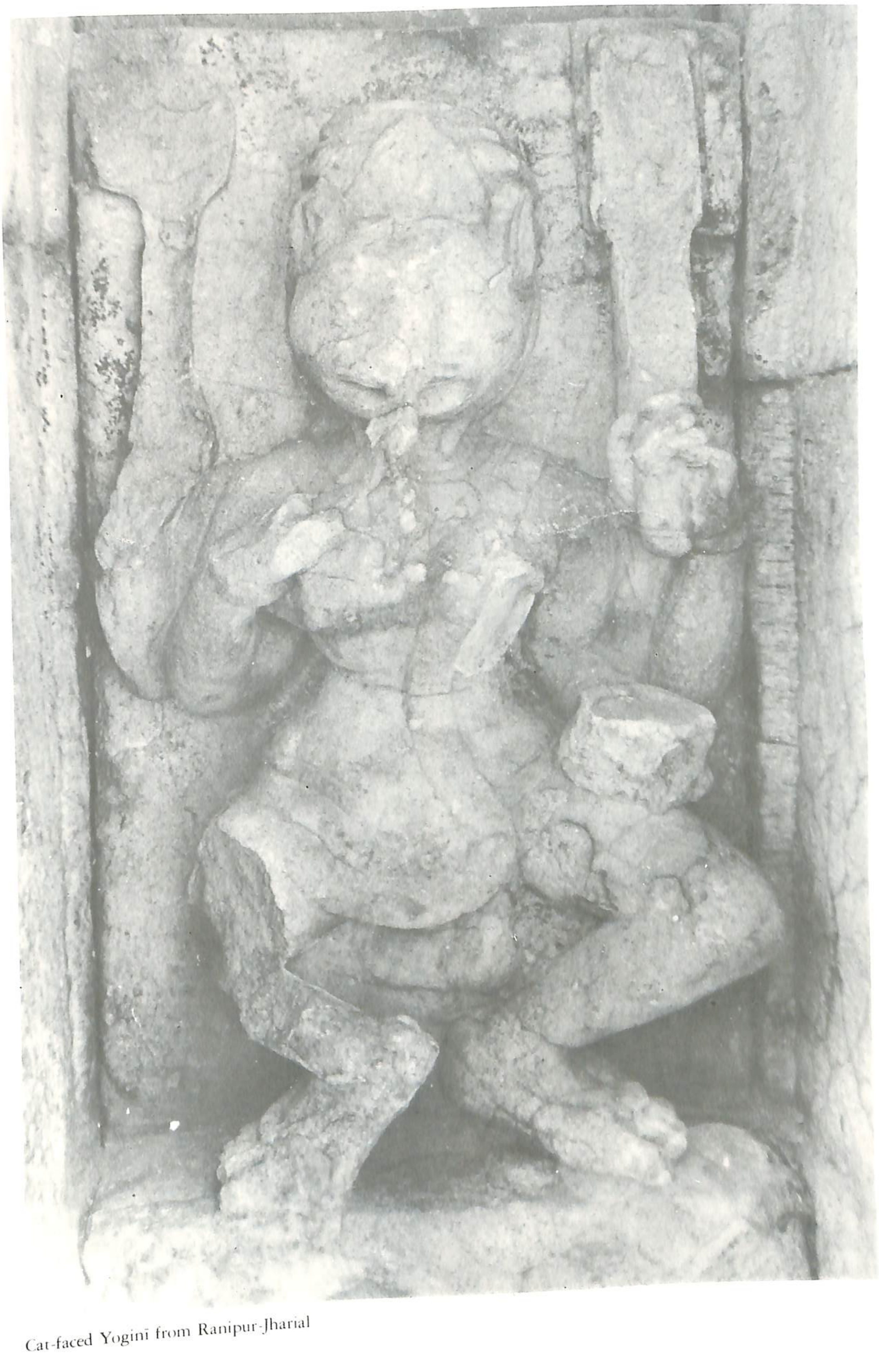
Outer walls of Yoginī temple at Ranipur-Jharial, showing walled up second entrance



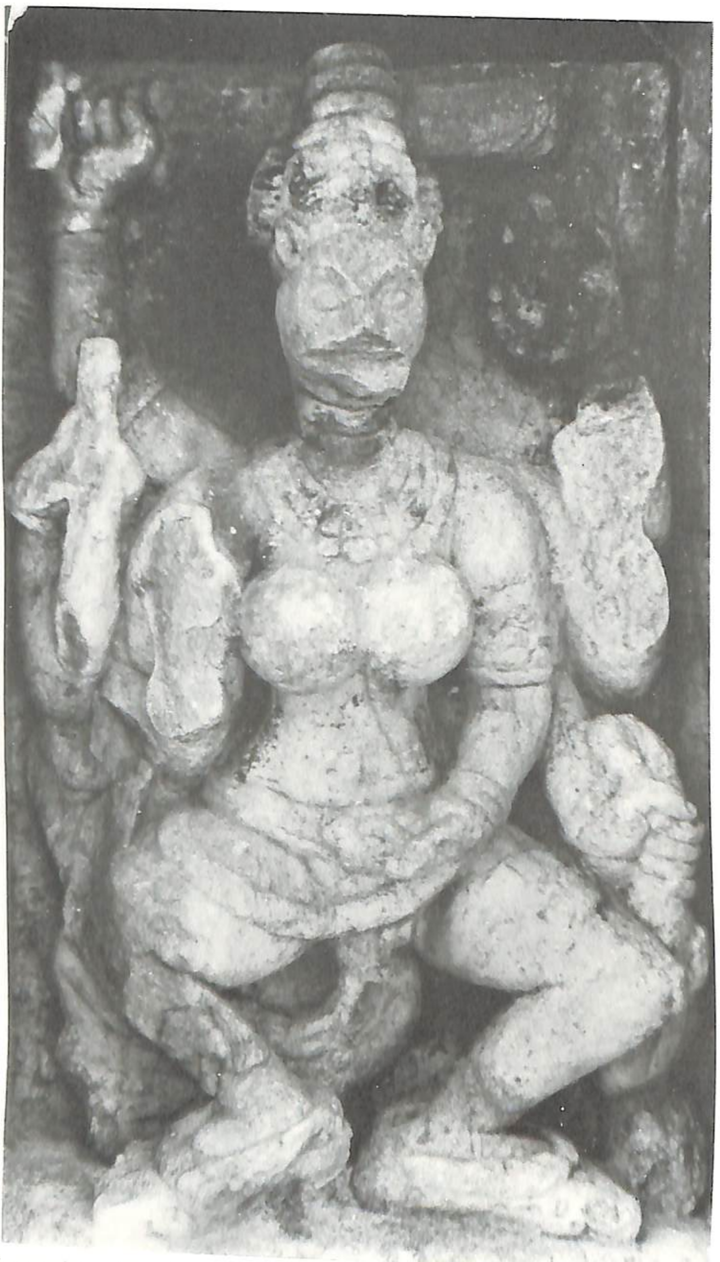
Details of Ranipur-Jharial's dancing Śiva

Among the missing Yoginīs is one who would have been unique as she had the attributes associated with Sūrya. Cunningham described her, more than a century ago, as holding a lotus in each of her two hands and as having seven horses depicted against her pedestal.[10] Another intriguing but sadly damaged image is intact only from the knees down today, and shows us a Yoginī dancing upon a recumbent male figure. Cunningham's description is of a six or eight armed image with one pair of hands pulling wide open her mouth, and her other hands holding a sword, a skull-cup and a kettle-drum. The gesture of her hands suggests her possible idenfication with such Yoginīs as Aṭṭāṭahāsā (She who laughs loudly) or Hāhāravā (She who utters loud sounds).

The Yoginīs of Ranipur-Jharial are all carved from the same coarse-grained inferior sandstone that was used to construct the walls of the temple. The stone is badly weathered and this has greatly affected the quality of the sculptures. Only in a few instances can one discern the lost finesse and original charm of the figures. Close-up photographs of some of the Yoginīs give an indication of the once finely delineated features of their handsome faces, while expressive in its carving are the grotesque Yoginī such as No. 38, with her sunken eyes and her flaming hair crowned by a tiara of skulls. Admittedly Ranipur-Jharial lacks the impact of Hirapur, but it appears that the reason lies more in the unfortunate choice of the material than in uninspired workmanship.[11]

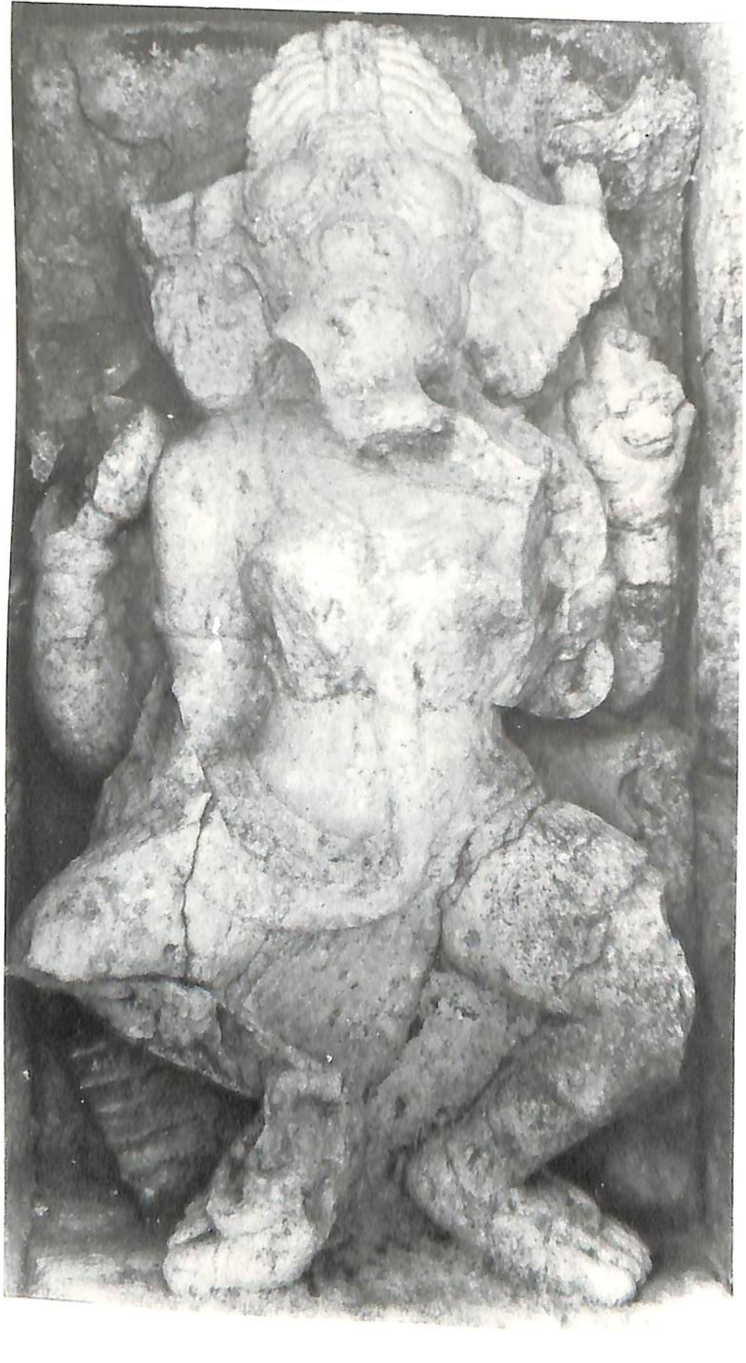


Cat-faced Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial

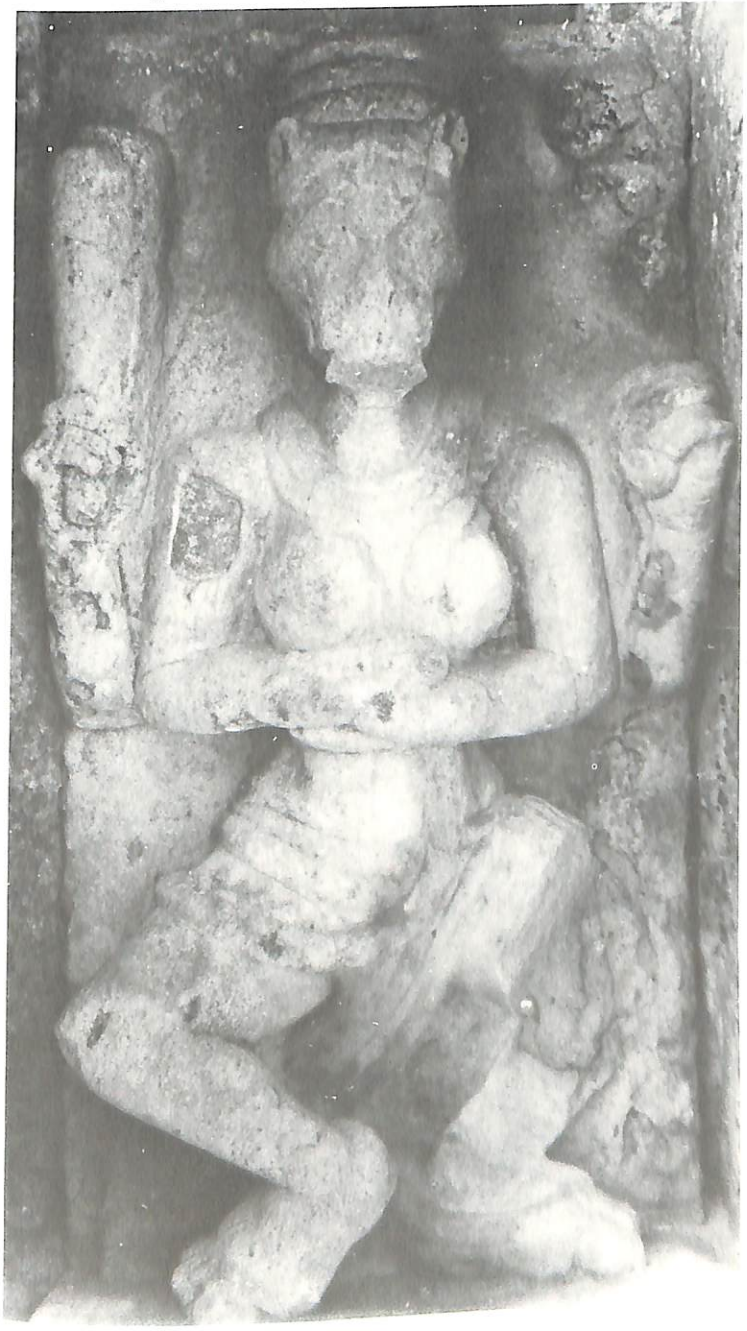


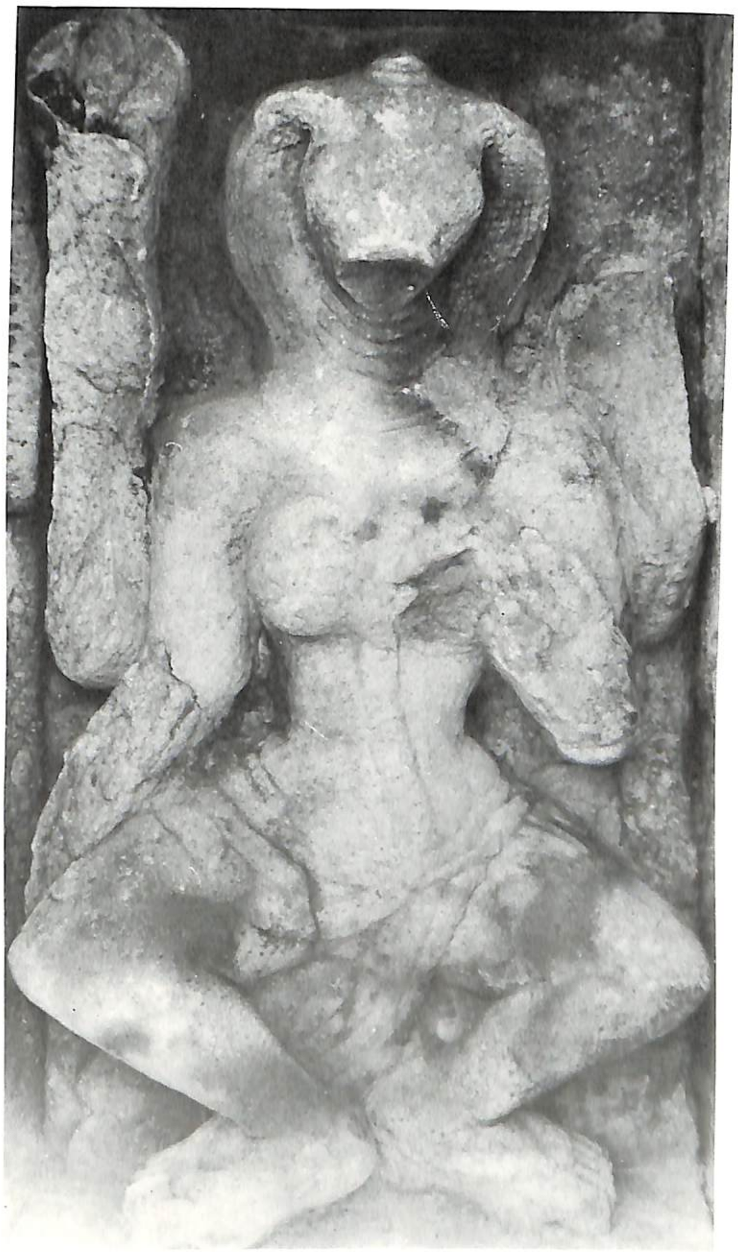
Leopard-faced Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial, holding severed human heads in both hands.

Vaināyakī Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial

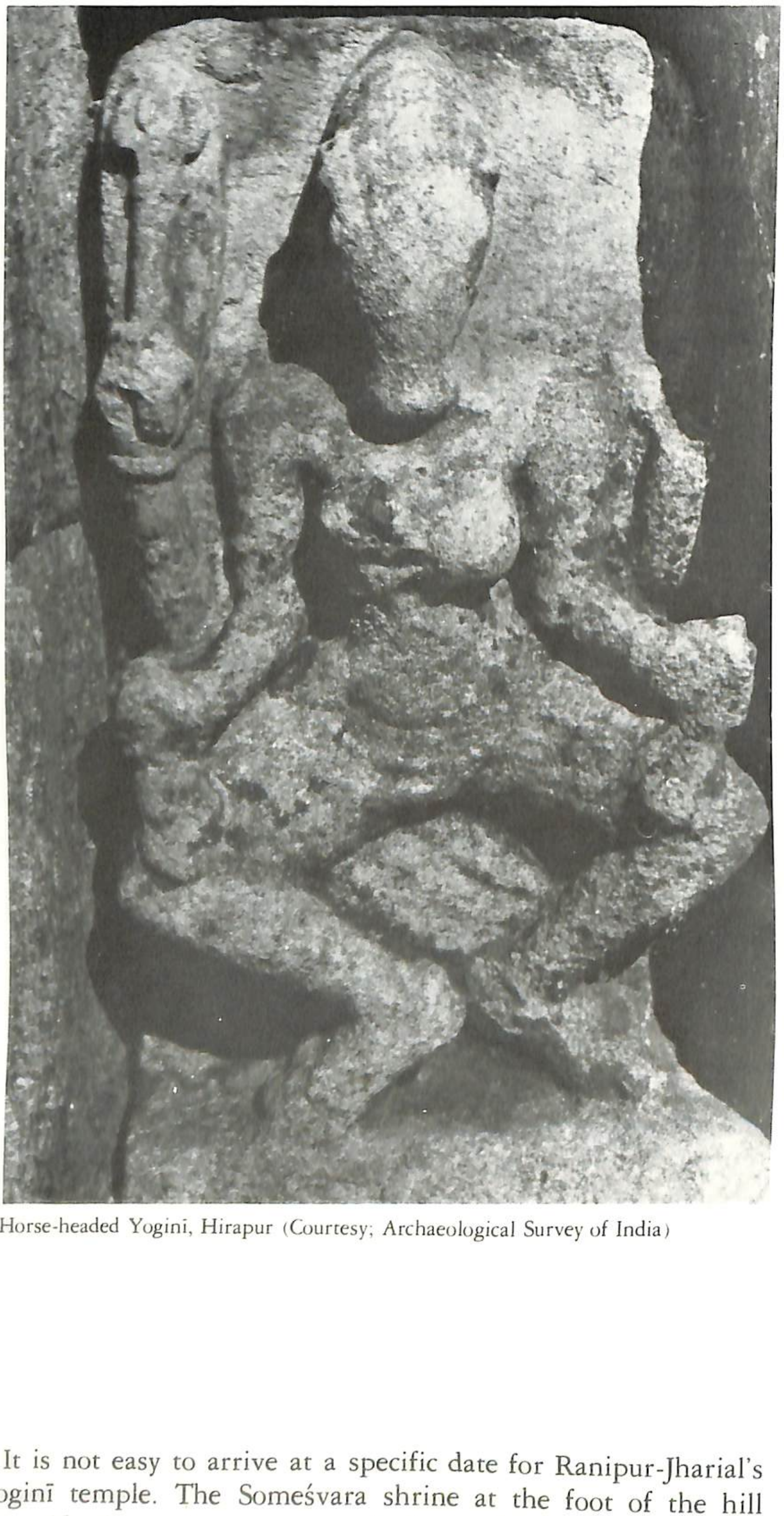


Sow-faced Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial



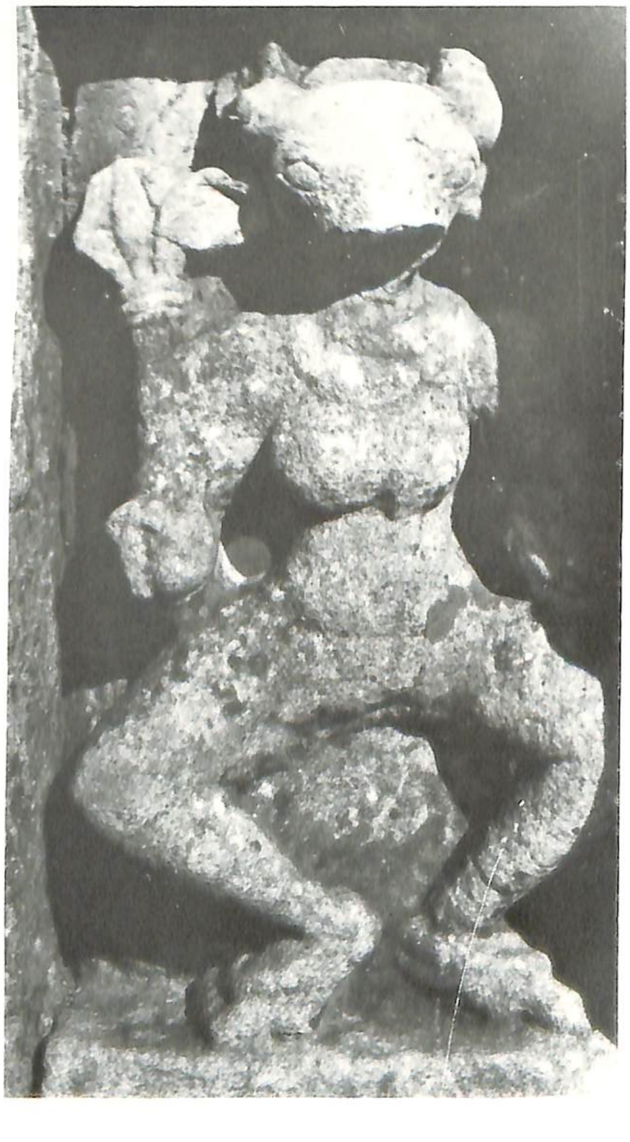


Snake-faced Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial.

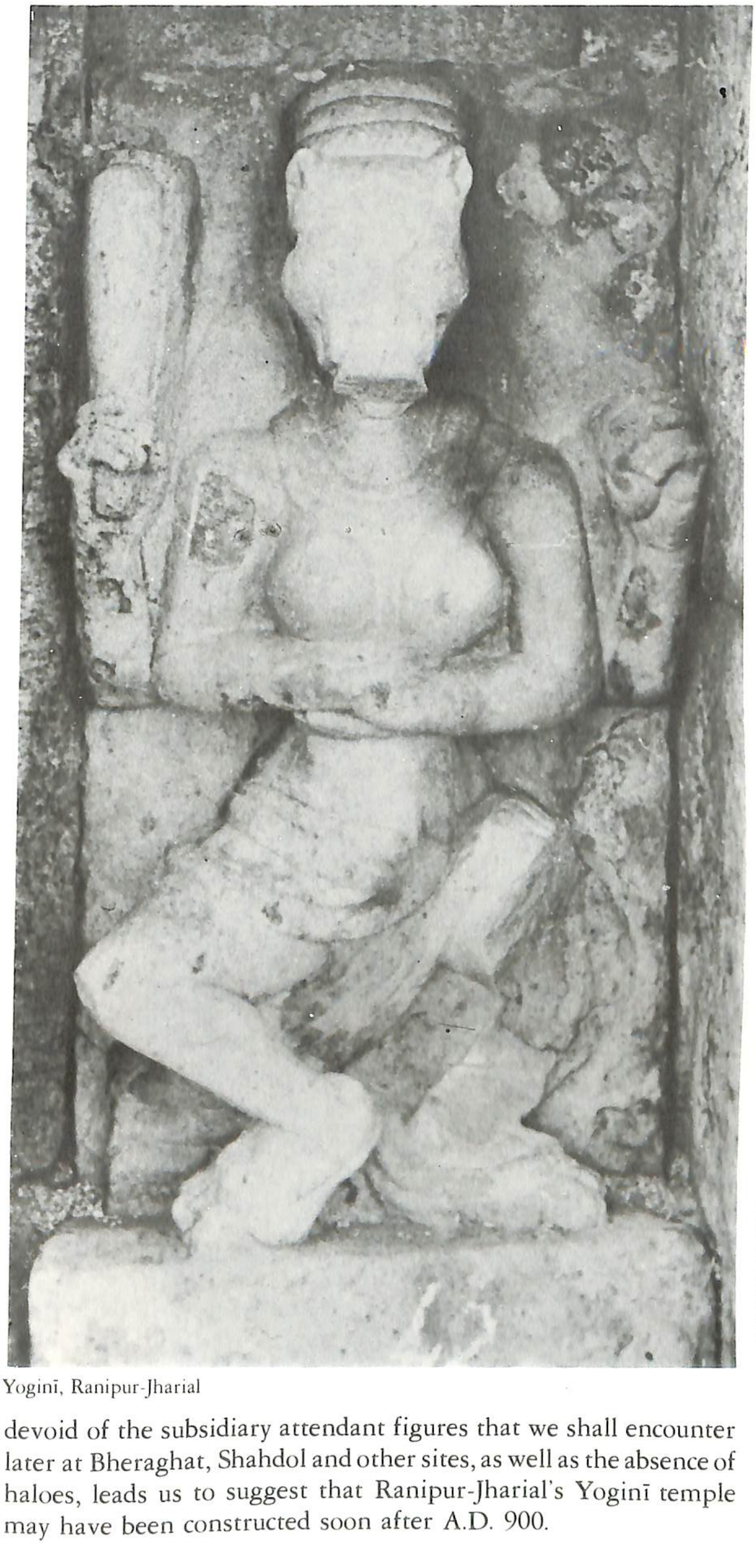


Horse-headed Yoginī, Hirapur (Courtesy; Archaeological Survey of India)

Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial

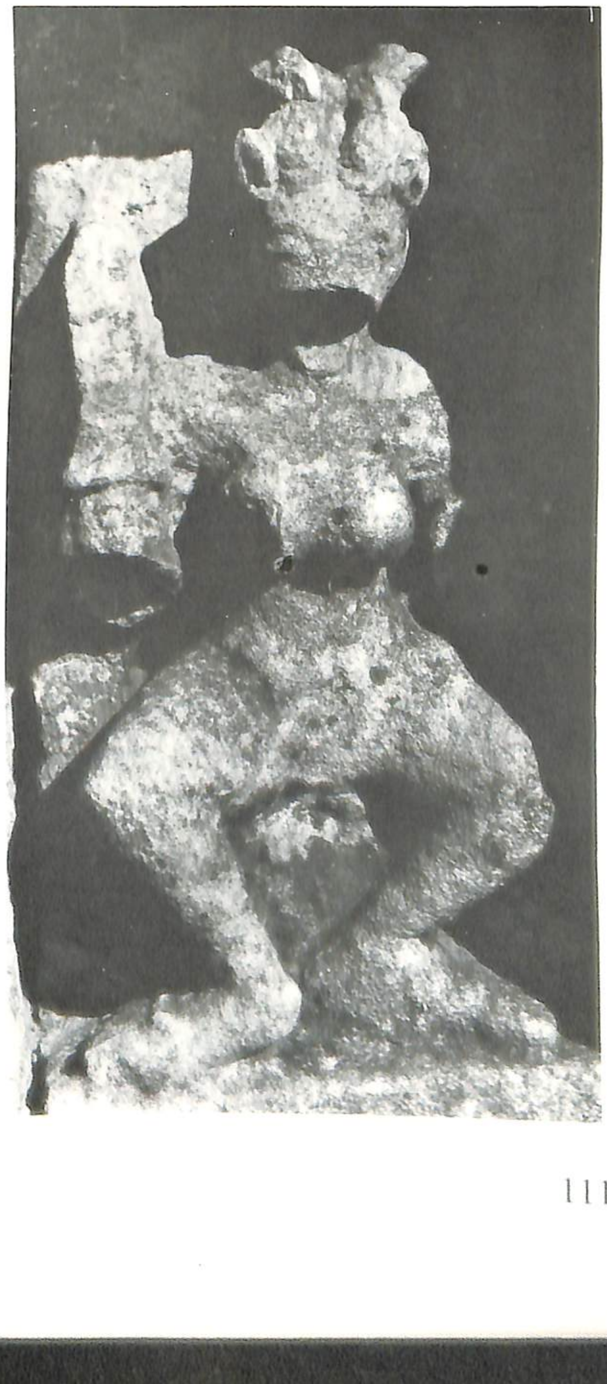


It is not easy to arrive at a specific date for Ranipur-Jharial's Yoginī temple. The Someśvara shrine at the foot of the hill alongside the tank appears, on the basis of plan, decoration and inscriptional evidence, to have been constructed prior to A.D. 900,[12] while some of the other temples at the site could well date a hundred years later. As far as Ranipur-Jharial's Yoginīs are concerned, it is difficult to make any judgements on the basis of sculptural style. Quite apart from the badly worn condition of the stone which precludes the validity of such comparisons, there is little sculptural material in interior Orissa for such a study. Comparison with the work of sculptors in the distant centre of Bhubanesvar would scarcely be correct. The simple carving of the Yoginī slabs,

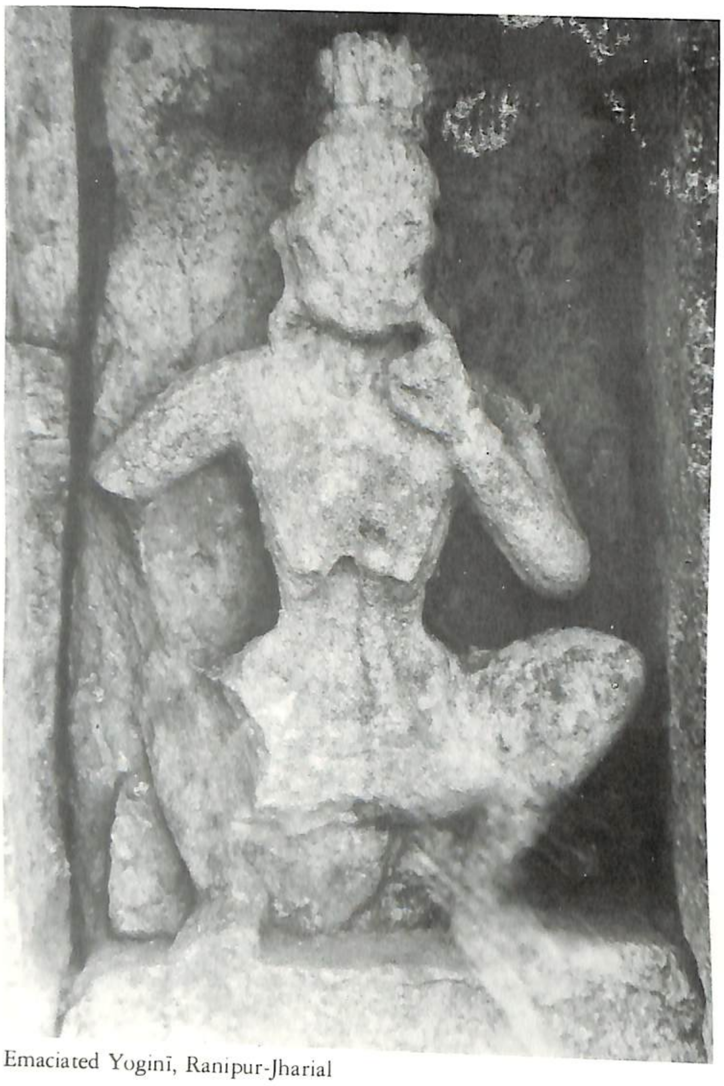


Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial

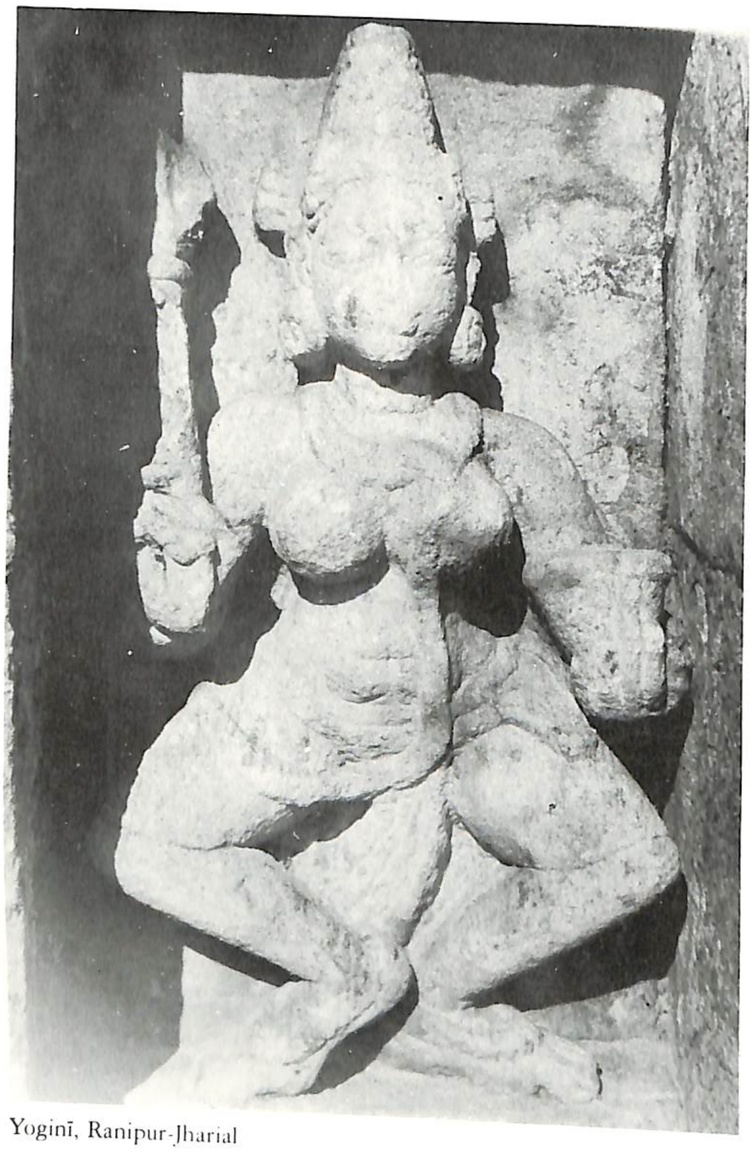
Horned Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial



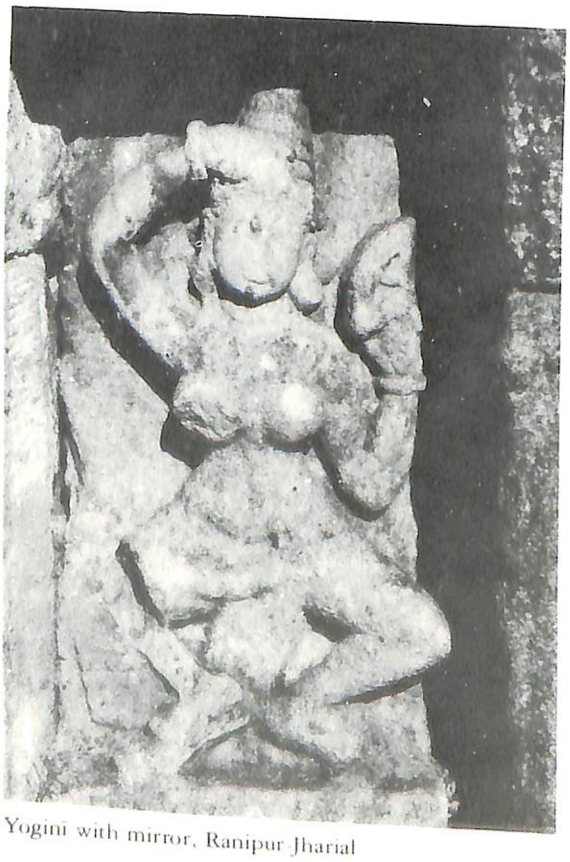
devoid of the subsidiary attendant figures that we shall encounter later at Bheraghat, Shahdol and other sites, as well as the absence of haloes, leads us to suggest that Ranipur-Jharial's Yoginī temple may have been constructed soon after A.D. 900.



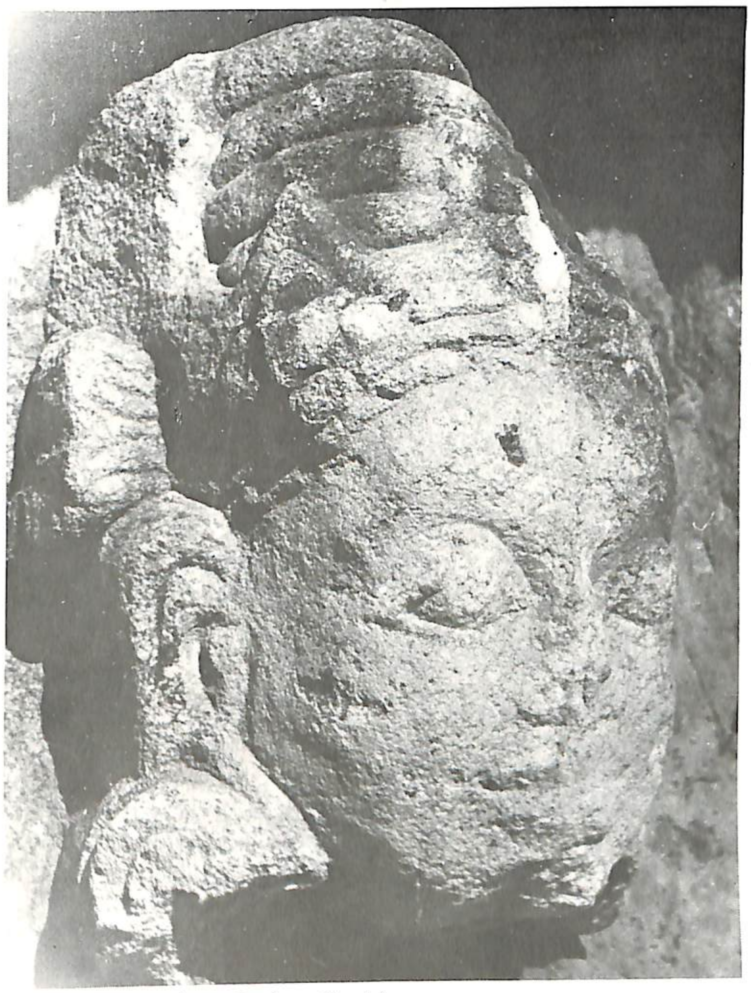
Emaciated Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial



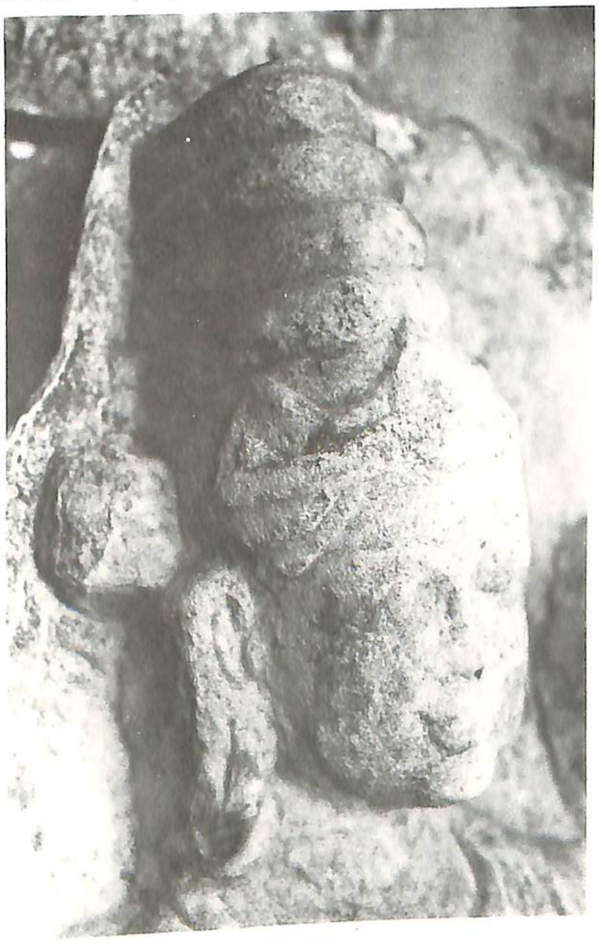
Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial



Yogini with mirror, Ranipur Jharial

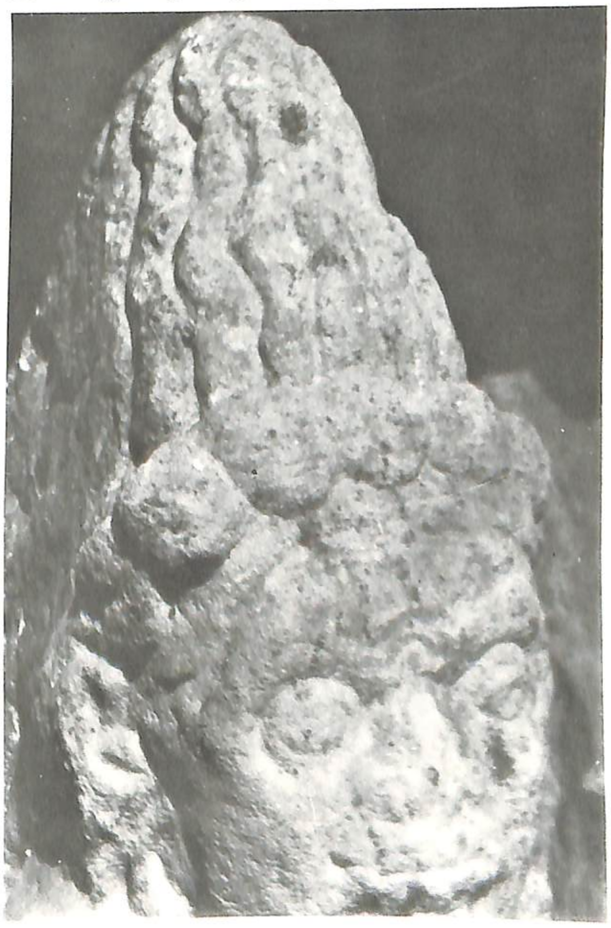


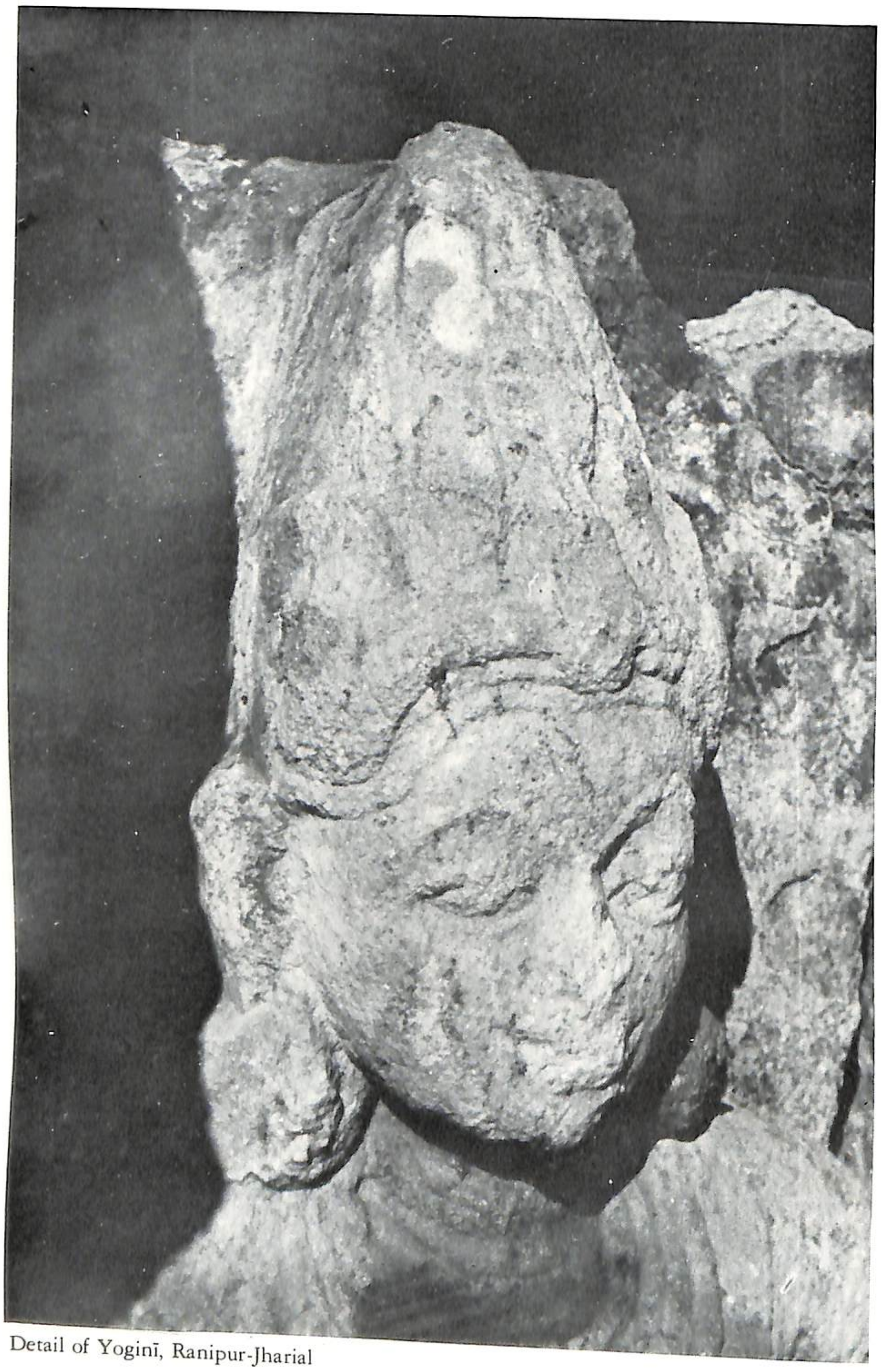
Detail of Yoginī from Ranipur-Jharial



Detail of Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial

Detail of grotesque Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial





Detail of Yoginī, Ranipur-Jharial

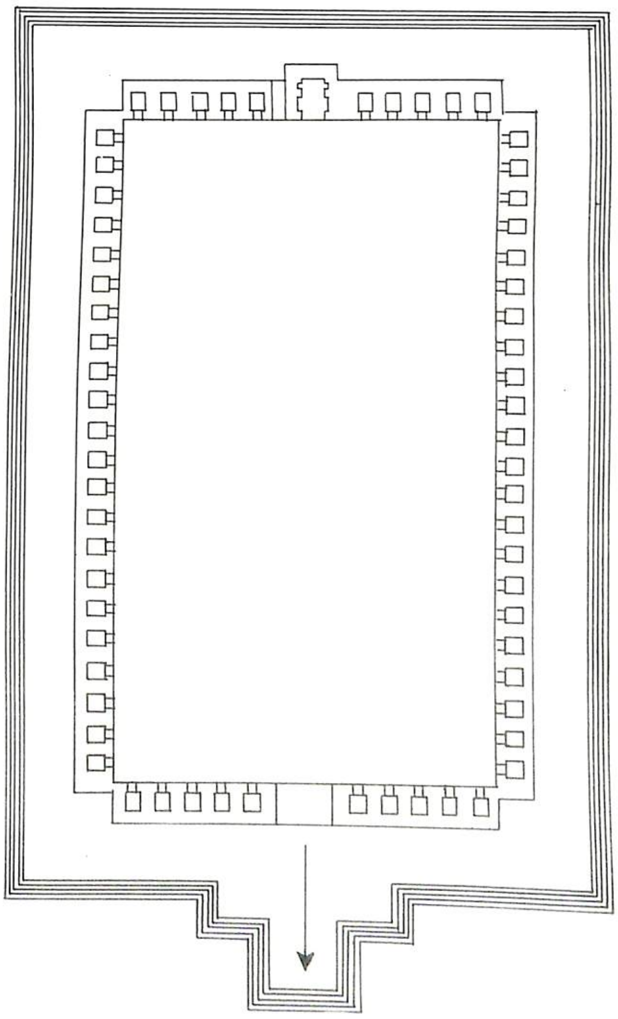
6. Sixty-Four Yoginī Temples in Central India

There are two intact temples of the sixty-four Yoginīs in central India, one at Khajuraho and the other at Mitauli near Gwalior. A third temple of sixty-four must have existed at the site of Rikhiyan near Allahabad, from which a set of Yoginī images has been collected. Ironically, the two existing temples have no images in them, while the surviving Rikhiyan images are without a temple. Khajuraho alone of these three Yoginī temples has been published,[1] and while Mitauli is known, Rikhiyan has not so far been recognised as a Yoginī site. Central India has in addition yielded four other collections of Yoginī images. Since none of these groups consist of more than thirty Yoginīs, and since the temples that housed them are no longer in existence, it is not possible to determine whether they belong to temples of the sixty-four Yoginīs or to the other known groupings of eighty-one or forty-two Yoginīs. These collections of images will, therefore, be examined in an independent chapter.

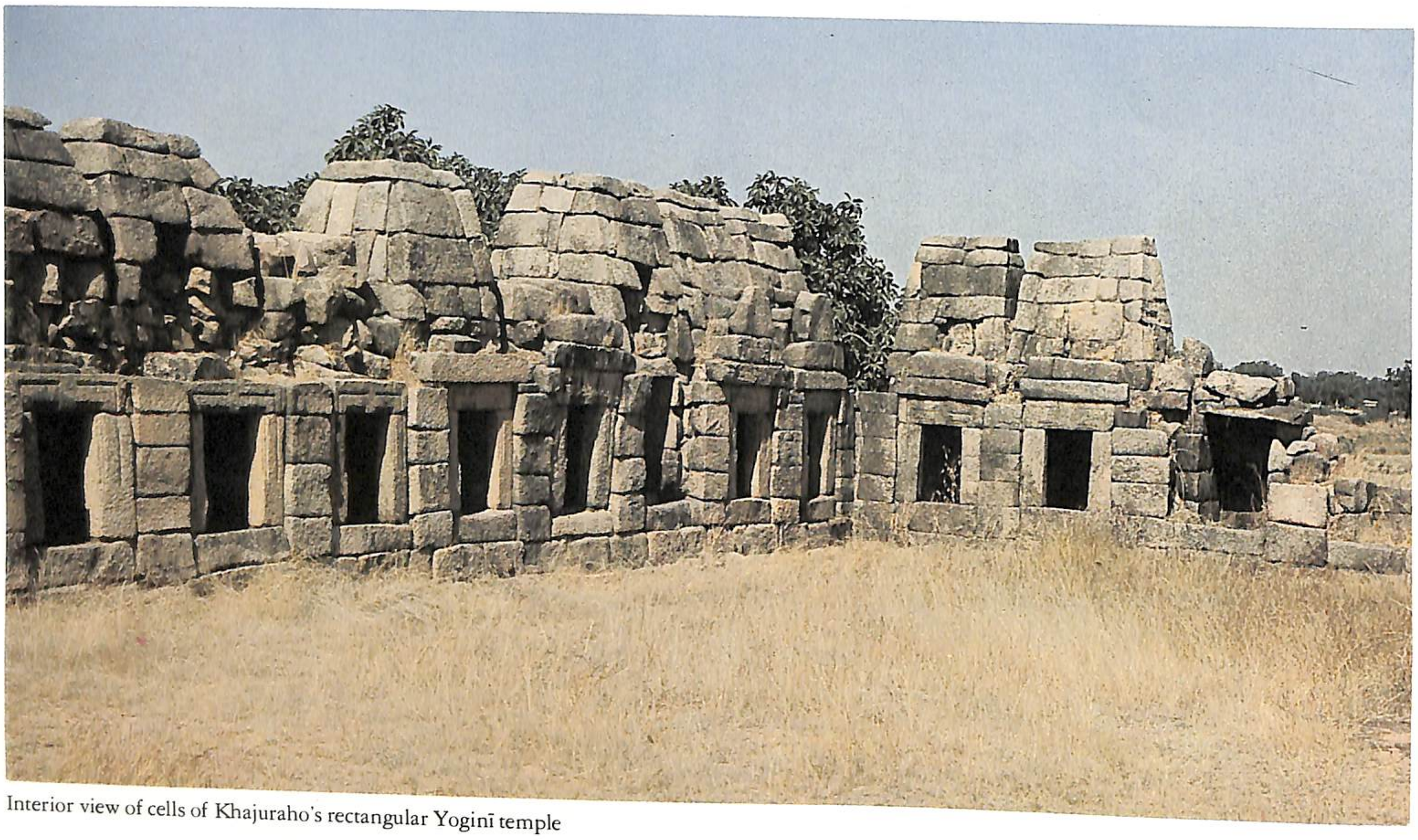
Khajuraho's rectangular Yoginī Temple

Not far from the main group of Candella temples at the famous site of Khajuraho, and standing somewhat apart on a mound of slight eminence, is a rectangular Yoginī temple built of granite blocks. Sixty-five individual shrines, each planned as a miniature structural temple with a pyramidal tower and distinct base mouldings, are placed side by side in a rectangular formation. Although the stone is badly weathered, traces of a frontal arch projection are still seen on some of the better preserved examples. As the plan indicates, thirty-two cells of equal size are placed in rectangular formation on either side of a much larger central shrine-cell. There is no surviving evidence to indicate that the temple contained a detached central pavilion to house an image of Śiva. If such was indeed the case, we must assume that the figure of the god was placed in the large central cell so that, in this position, Bhairava remained at the centre of the group of Yoginīs.

Today every cell of Khajuraho's Yoginī temple is empty and not one of the images has been traced. Our only data consists of photographs of three of the sixty-four Khajuraho Yoginīs, taken in the year 1955. The first Yoginī, labelled Hinglāja, is clearly Mahiṣamardinī, the inscription providing us with a local name for this important widely-worshipped goddess. With one leg planted firmly on the ground and one placed on the back of the vanquished

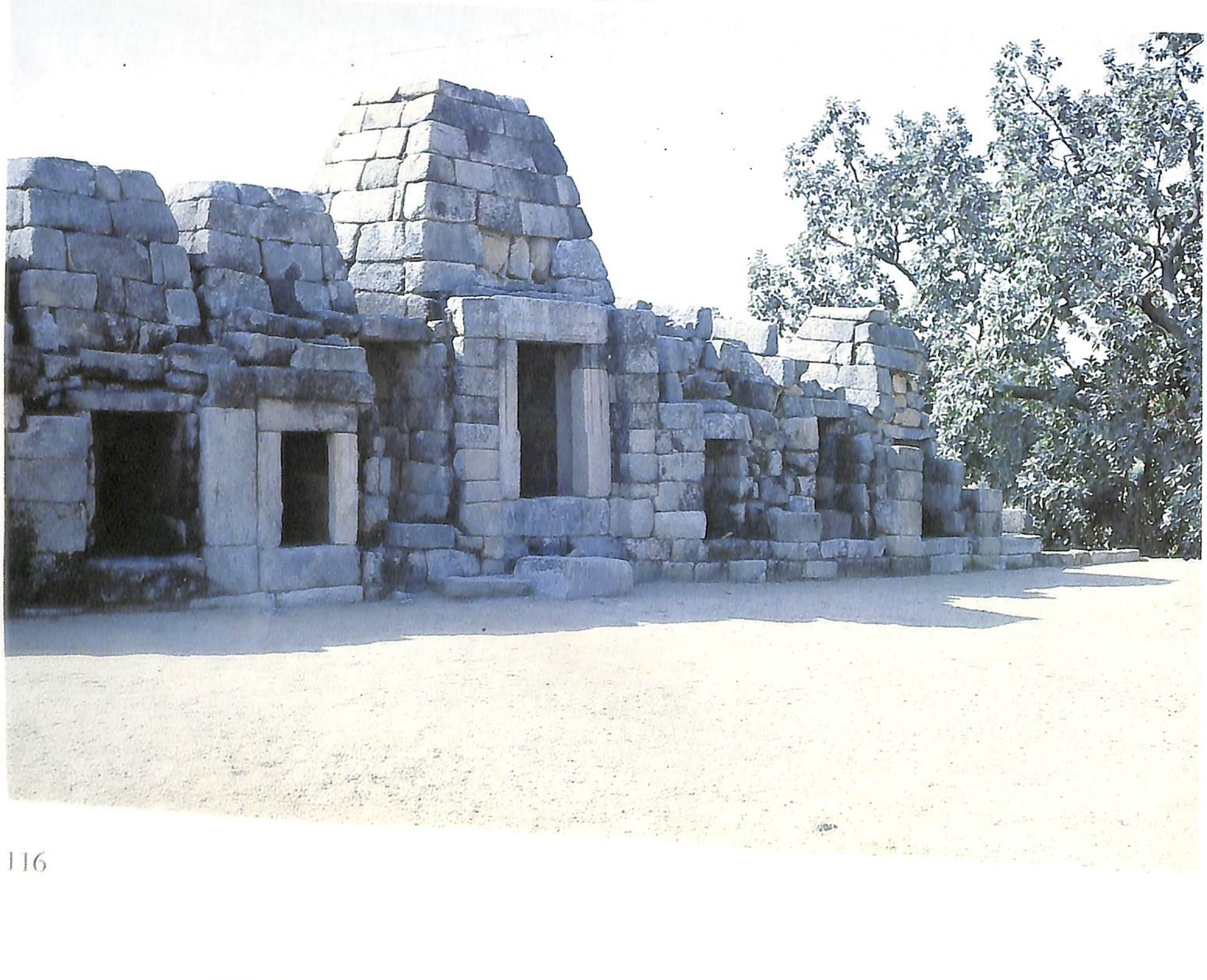


Plan of Khajuraho's rectangular Yoginī temple



Interior view of cells of Khajuraho's rectangular Yoginī temple

View of Khajuraho's rectangular Yoginī temple showing central (65th) larger cell

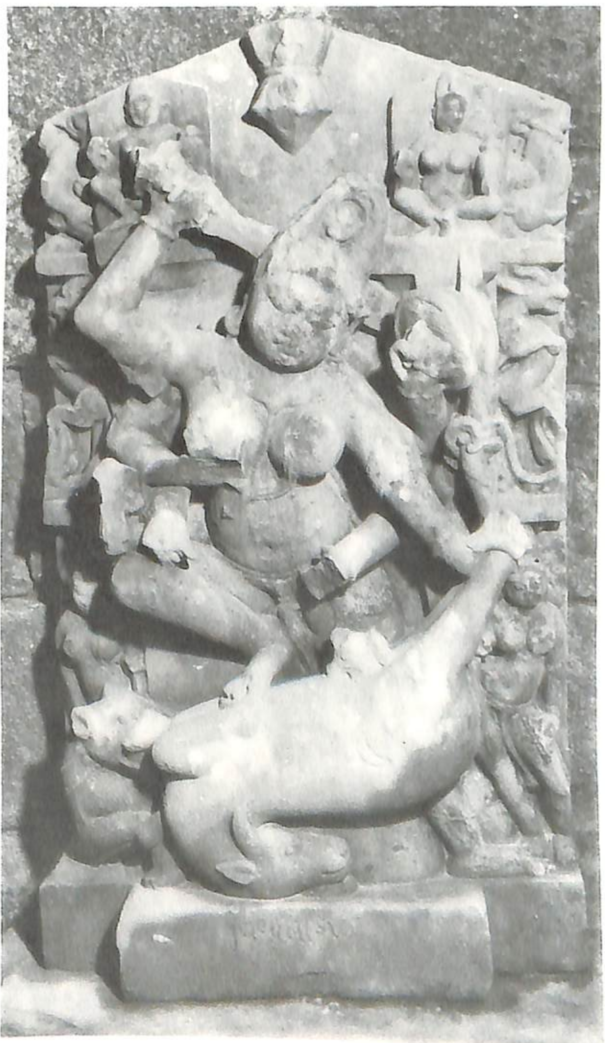


buffalo, she holds the animal by its legs, with her lion-mount aiding in the battle. Only two of her eight arms remain intact and with these she brandishes a sword and a shield. The slab is completed by the inclusion of female attendants at the base and seated deities at the top. The second slab depicts four-armed Mātṛkā Māheśvarī holding a trident in one hand, with a small humped bull beside her and a clearly inscribed label. The third Yoginī is the Mātṛkā Brāhmī with three faces and a *haṁsa* as her mount, while flanking her are attendants and seated deities. The part of the pedestal bearing the inscription is broken away but the identification is in no doubt. Clearly the Khajuraho Yoginī tradition included the Mātṛkās in its grouping of sixty-four Yoginīs.

It has been suggested, largely on the basis of the use of granite, that Khajuraho's Yoginī temple belongs to the 9th century.[2] However, the Yoginīs now have a plain oval halo behind their heads, while the carving of the slabs with attendant figures at the base, throne decoration along the central background and seated deities at the top, is distinctly in advance of the simplified carving seen in Orissa's Yoginī temples, and suggests a date closer to the middle of the 10th century. In view of the brevity of the inscriptions, the palaeographic evidence would be unreliable for dating the temple. At any rate, we can definitely state that Khajuraho's Yoginī temple was built during Candella domination of the area.

It is not clear why Khajuraho adopted a rectangular plan when most other Yoginī temples are circular. It has been suggested that the mound on which it is built could not have accommodated a circular temple,[3] but this assumption is unfounded. More pertinent is the fact that a series of individual rectangular shrines do not lend themselves to a circular placement. At the same time, Khajuraho's choice of such individual shrines and their arrangement in a rectangular formation, is undoubtedly a deliberate and planned action. There are two other rectangular Yoginī temples at Rikhiyan and Badoh, and hence it appears that there was a tradition of rectangular temples, at least in this region.

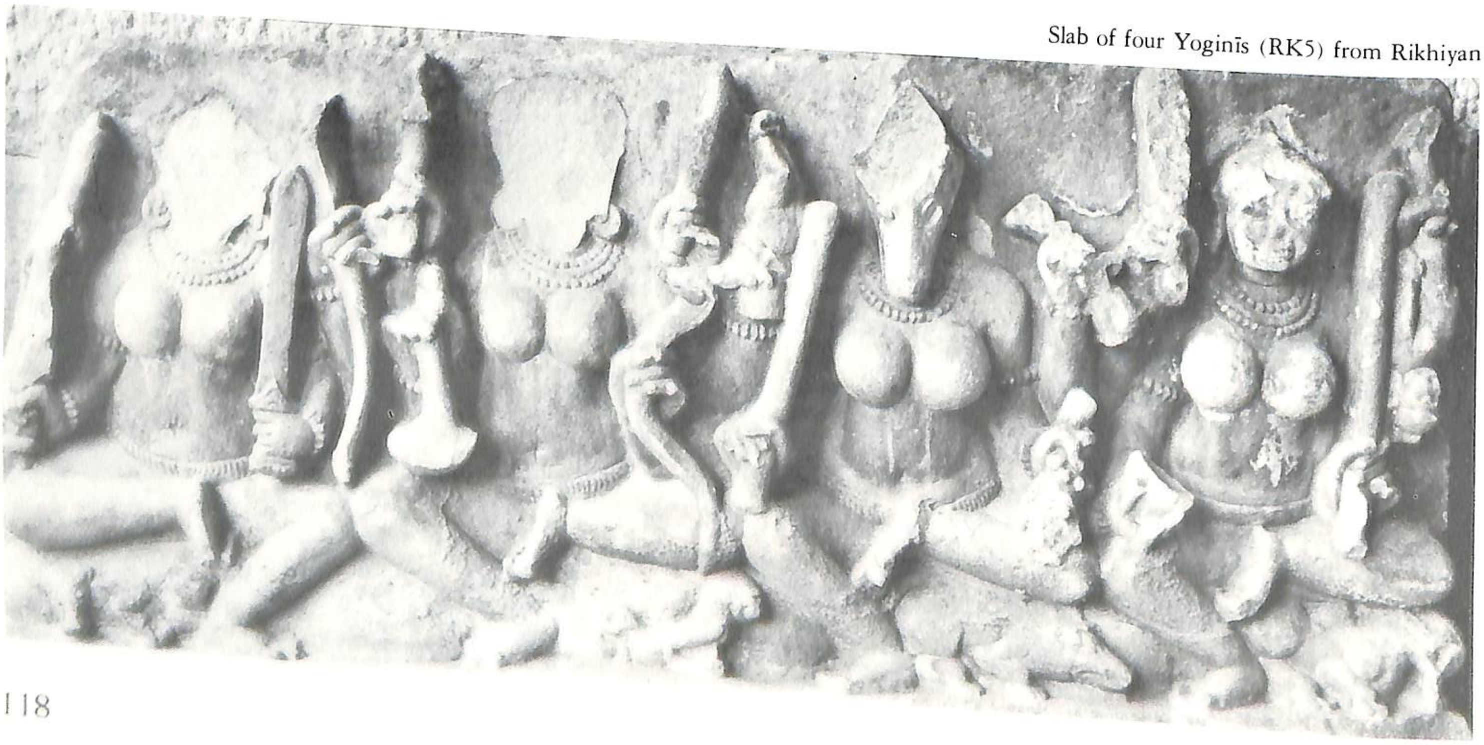
Khajuraho's Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī Hinglaja (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



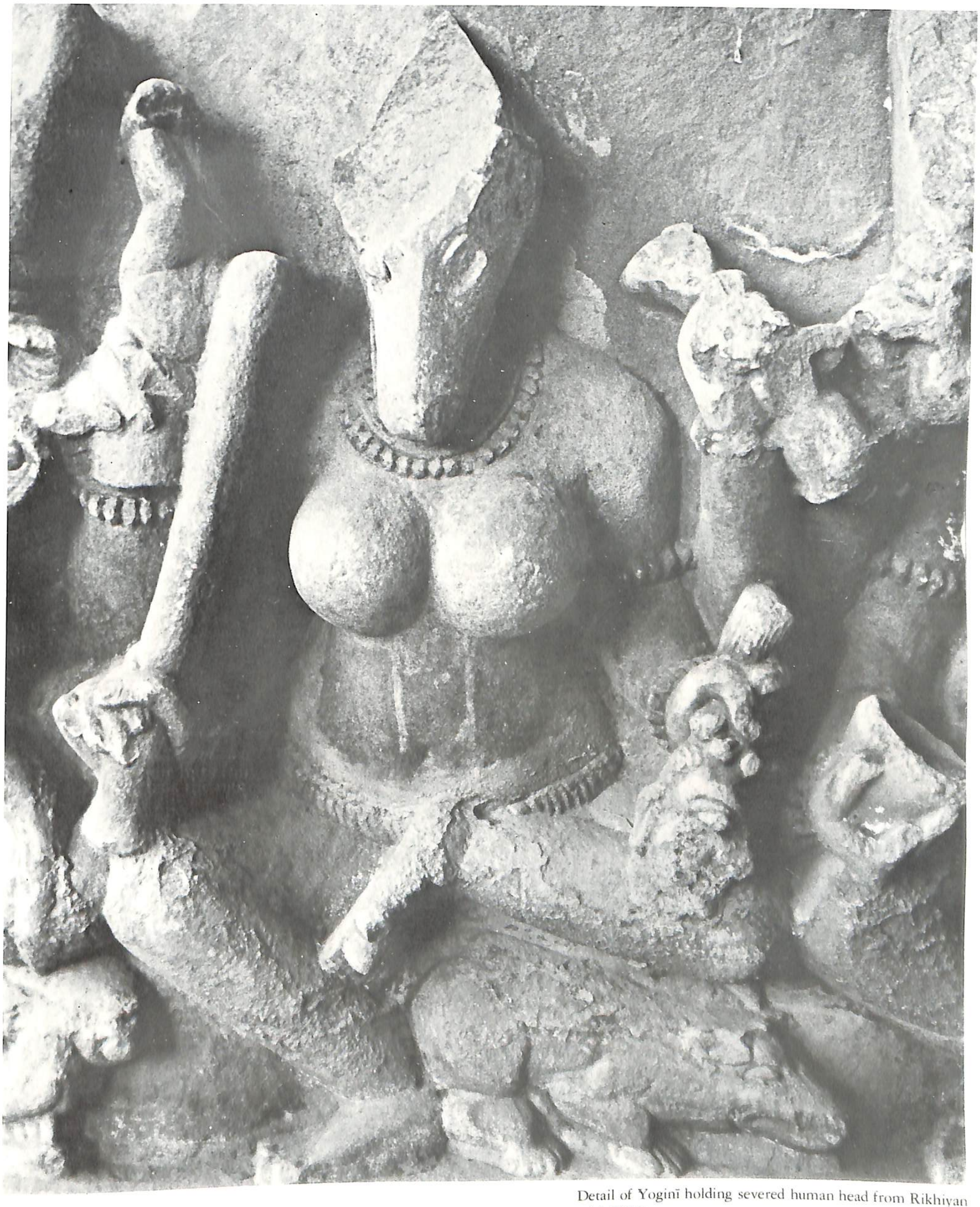
Rikhiyan's Yoginīs

Roughly one hundred and fifty miles from Khajuraho, in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, along the south bank of the river Jumna, is the shady, deserted glen of Rikhiyan with an underground spring providing cool fresh water. Only a solitary temple stands on a rocky outcrop, but numerous architectural fagments and carved stones lying around the site indicate that Rikhiyan was at one time the scene of considerable temple-building. Rikhiyan's Yoginī temple is no longer in existence, but we would suggest that like Khajuraho, it was rectangular. The Yoginīs from this site are carved in sets of four on long rectangular slabs which have no curvature along their length. The slabs were apparently intended for rectangular placement, and multiples of four indicate a temple of the sixty-four Yoginīs. When first reported in 1909, at which time the slabs were also photographed, there were still ten slabs (forty Yoginīs) at Rikhiyan. Since then the site has been steadily ransacked, and recently the authorities removed the remaining three slabs (twelve Yoginīs) to the nearby Gadhwa fort for protection.

The slab from Gadhwa labelled RK5 gives us a good idea of the Rikhiyan Yoginīs. The goddesses and their mounts are carved against a totally plain background with no accompanying figures of any type. Each Yoginī sits in *lalitāsana* with one leg resting on the ground and the other folded at the knee and placed upon her *vāhana*. These Yoginīs, sculpted with heavy breasts, broad waist and large stomach, speak definitely of an inferior quality of workmanship. Interesting from the point of view of cult practices are Yoginīs 3 and 4 on this slab. Horse-headed Yoginī 3 sits upon a creature that is part boar and part chameleon, and holds in her hands a severed human head, a human corpse, a bell and a club. She is reminiscent of the Yoginī Hayānanā (Horse-headed One), described in several texts as holding severed heads in two hands (See Appendix II). Yoginī 4 beside her sits upon a lion and holds a human body by its legs, a skull-cup and two clubs. The association

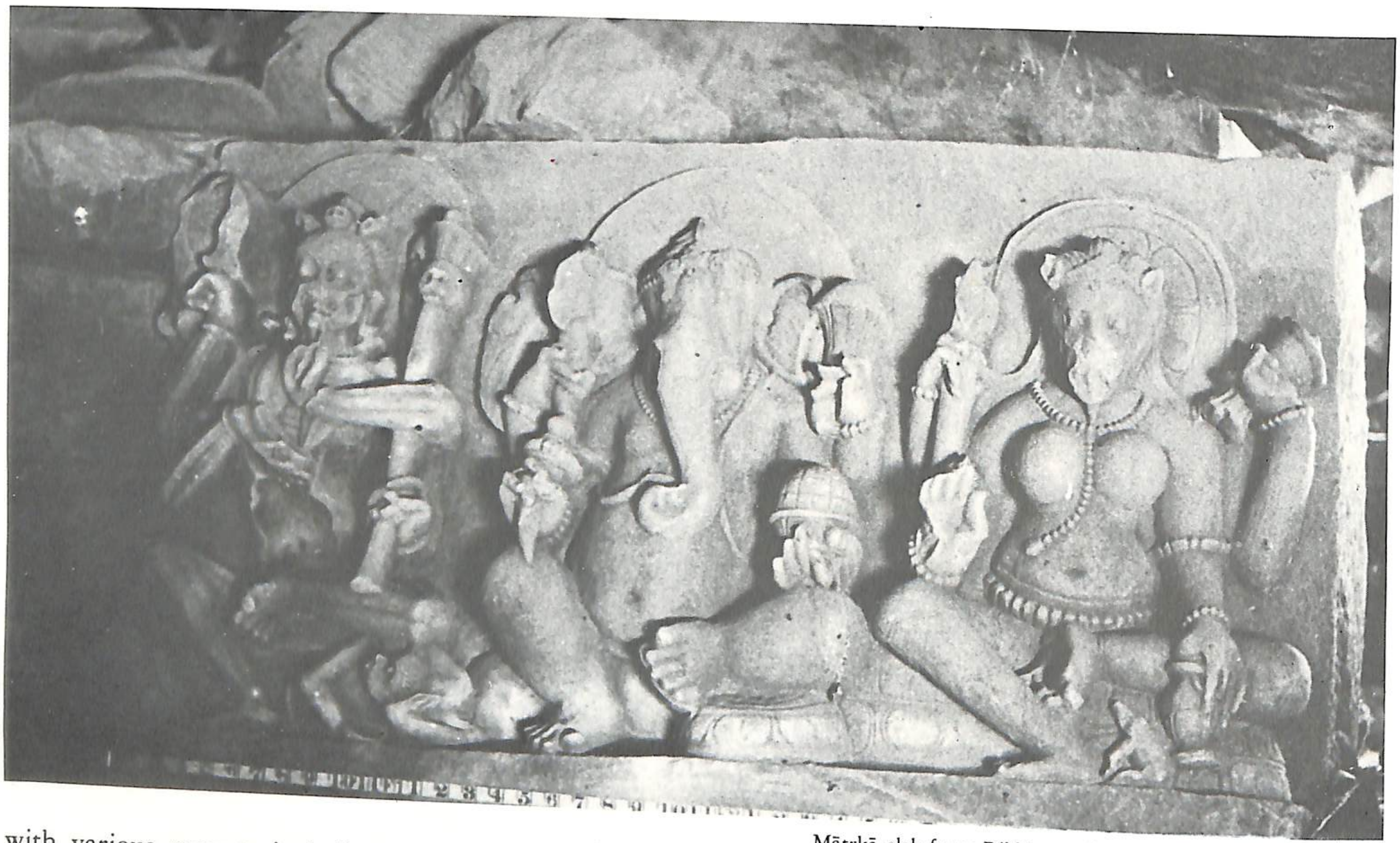


Slab of four Yoginīs (RK5) from Rikhiyan



Detail of Yoginī holding severed human head from Rikhiyan (slab RK5)

with corpses and severed heads on this slab, as on others at Rikhiyan, are an indication of *śava sādhanā* or corpse ritual being a part of the Yoginī cult. The other two Gadhwa slabs depict Yoginīs

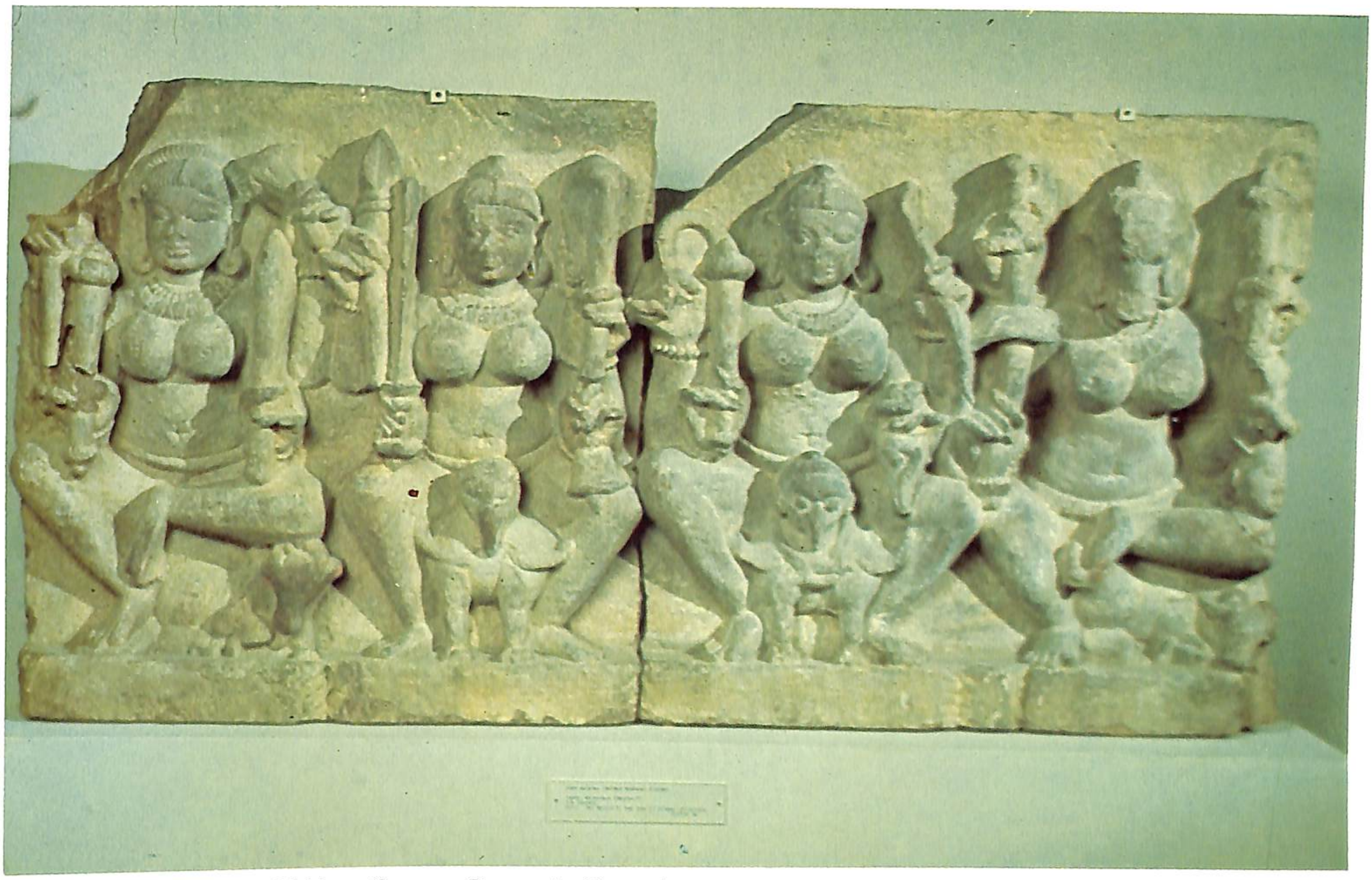


Mātṛkā slab from Rikhiyan (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

with various mounts including the owl, boar, peacock and the human corpse, while one Yoginī of emaciated form holds a corpse and a skull-cup in two of her four hands. None of the Rikhiyan Yoginīs have haloes.

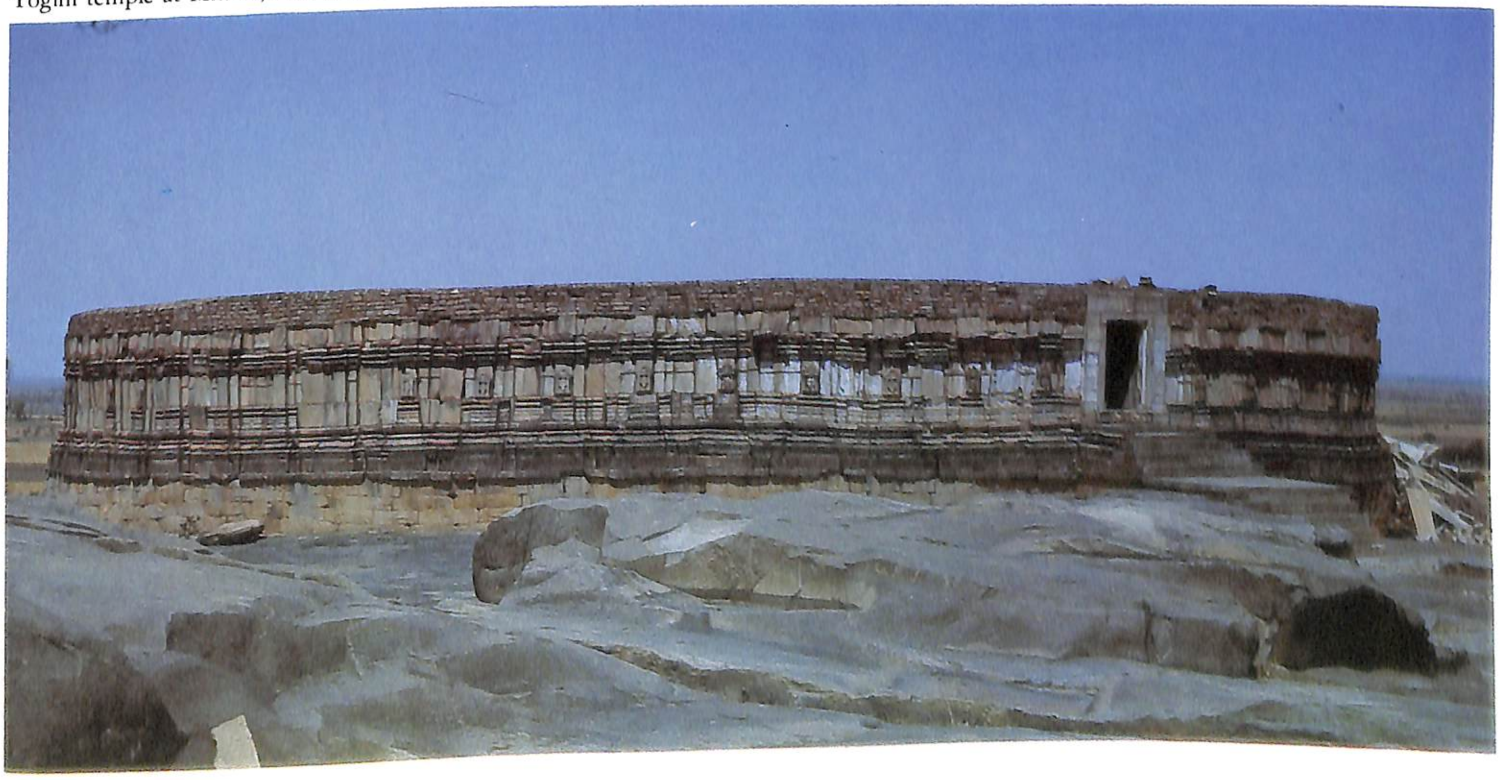
A Rikhiyan slab, now in the Denver Art Museum is better preserved than those left at the site. It depicts two Mātṛkās, Vārāhī and Vaiṣṇavī, and two others, clearly indicating that the Rikhiyan tradition included the Mātṛkās among its sixty-four Yoginīs. Vārāhī has a buffalo mount and holds two clubs, an axe and a severed head, while Vaiṣṇavī has the winged *garuḍa* as her mount, and the conch, discus, bow and club as her attributes. A 1909 photograph shows a slab with two interesting Yoginīs: a lion-faced Yoginī (perhaps Nārasiṁhī) has a boar-child seated upright on her lap, and elephant-headed Vaināyakī holds battleaxe, club, flower and snake. The dating of these weathered and often mutilated sandstone Yoginīs of indifferent workmanship is not easy. The absence of the halo and the lack of attendant figures and flying couples suggests affinity with the Orissan temples, and we would tentatively suggest that the Rikhiyan Yoginīs belong early in the 10th century.

A detailed study of the unpublished photographs taken in 1909[4] reveals a second set of goddesses, carved in sets of three on three slabs of stone. They may be distinguished from the Yoginīs by their petalled haloes, their lotus seats and the lotus flower placed under the foot of each figure. They are clearly a series of Aṣṭa Mātṛkās of the Brāhmī series, with Nārasiṁhī as the eighth Mother and Gaṇeśa as the ninth figure. Obviously, Rikhiyan also housed a rectangular shrine of the Mātṛkās in addition to its rectangular temple of the sixty-four Yoginīs.



Slab of four Yoginīs from Rikhiyan (Courtesy: Denver Art Museum)

Yoginī temple at Mitauli, near Gwalior

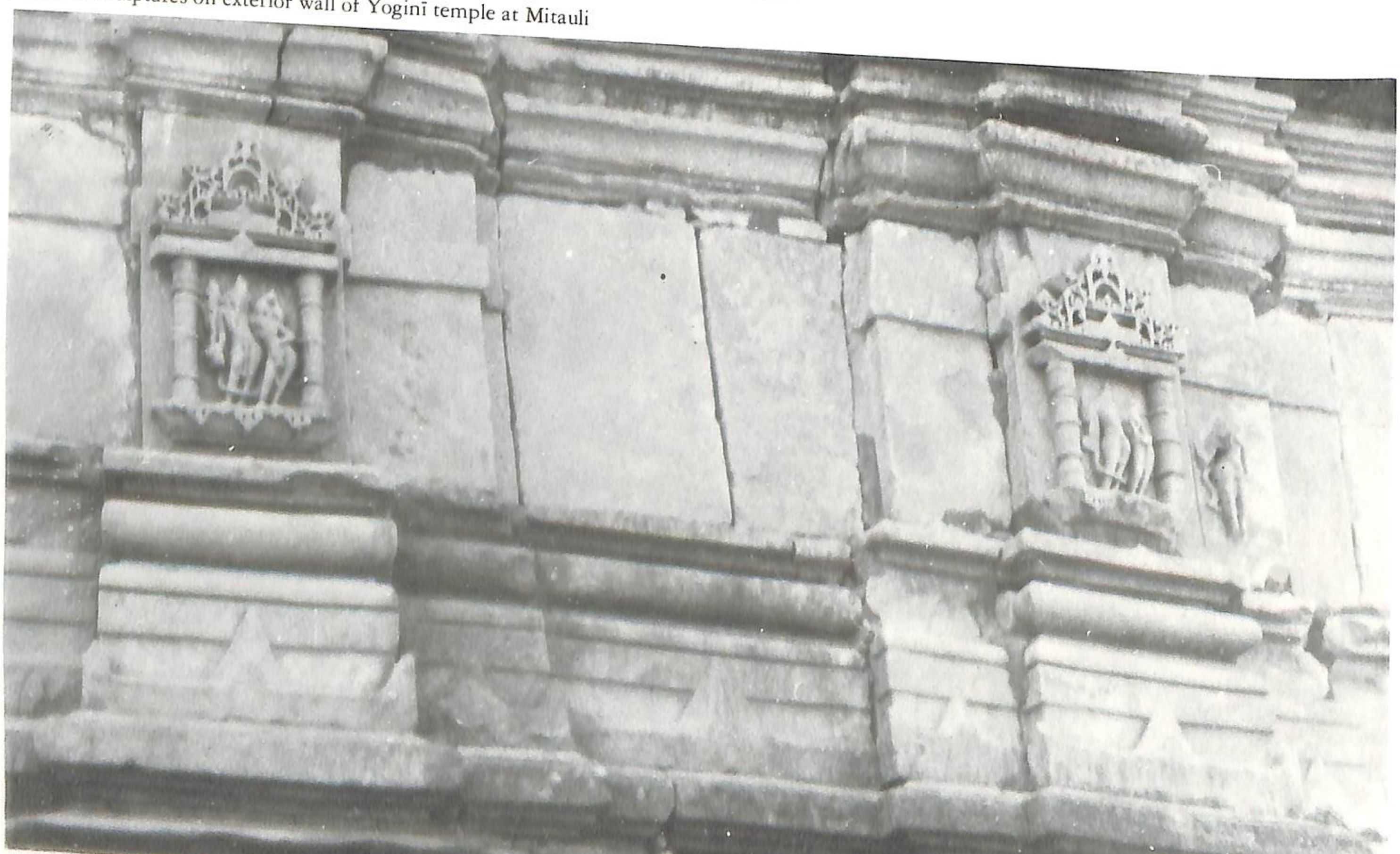


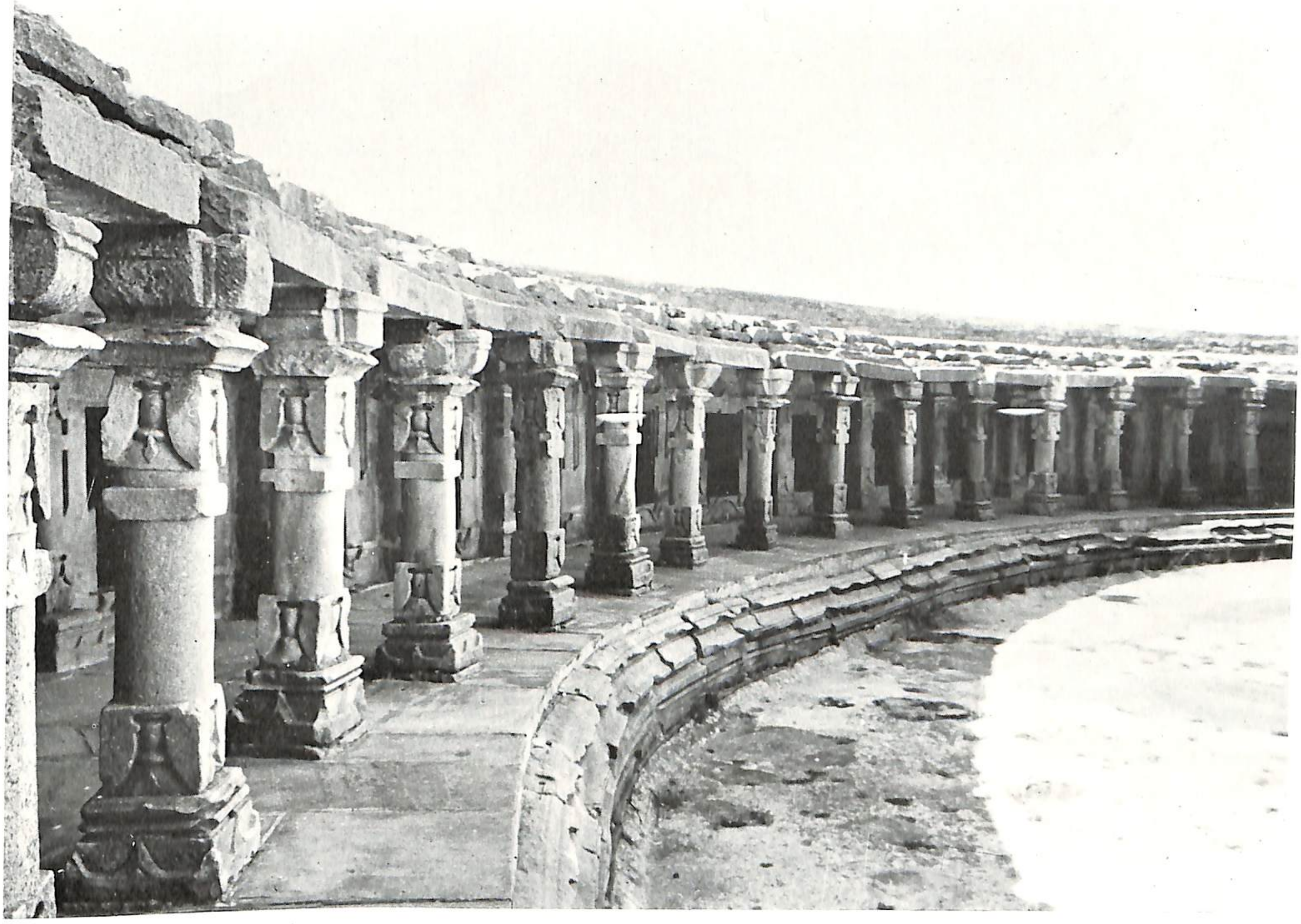
The Mitauli Temple

The Yoginī temple of Mitauli stands in splendid isolation on top of a hill some thirty miles from Gwalior. The walls of this large circular enclosure reveal several different courses of stone of which the topmost, composed of bricks and limestone, was added as part of conservation work, early in this century. The exterior walls of the temple, with several bands of moulding, display small niches that contain figures of couples flanked by maidens. However, most of these niches are empty while other contain badly damaged carvings.

The interior of the circular temple enclosure contains a pillared collonade that shelters sixty-five cells flanked by pilasters. Cell No. 37 has a special decorative treatment of its door jambs and lintel, and one wonders why a 65th cell was part of the plan of this temple. Since Śiva has his own central pavilion, one possible suggestion is that an image of Devī herself was added to this group of sixty-four Yoginīs surrounding Śiva. If this was indeed the case, it is possible that Khajuraho's additional larger cell served a similar purpose and that the central Śiva shrine at Khajuraho has been totally destroyed. Today, each of Mitauli's sixty-five cells contains a *liṅga* that stands on its own without the usual accompanying *yoni pīṭha*. It is certain that none of these *liṅga* stones are original and regrettably, not one of the Yoginī images once in occupation of the cells can be traced. It is curious that they should have been thus systematically removed and replaced with *liṅga* stones. In size, the Yoginī images were probably around three feet high in order to be visible to the devotees who viewed them through doorways that measure three

Detail of sculptures on exterior wall of Yoginī temple at Mitauli

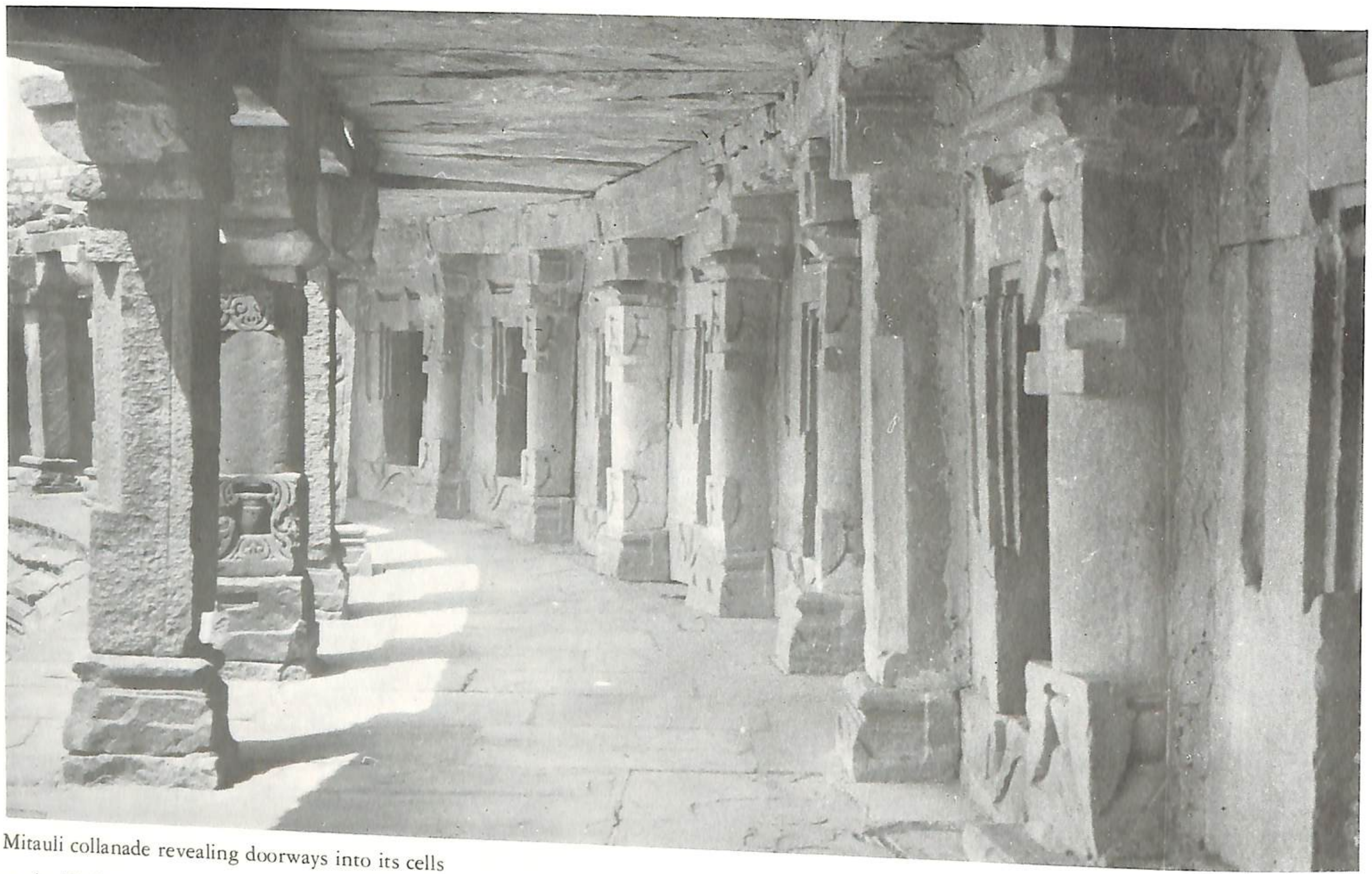




Interior of Mitauli's Yoginī temple

feet in height. At the centre of the Mitauli enclosure stands a large circular pavilion with two concentric rings of pillars. Today this is empty, but originally it must have housed images of Śiva and his accompanying entourage. The circular cloister as also the central circular pavilion are raised above the courtyard and may be reached by flights of steps.

There are inscriptions of varying dates at Mitauli, engraved on pillars, on the rock of the temple and along the entranceway.[5] The most important inscription is damaged and partly obliterated: it mentions Mahārājā Devapāla and his queen, refers to the construction of the temple, and records the date of Vikrama *saṁvat* 1380 or A.D. 1323. My interpretation of this fragmentary record, as mentioned earlier, sees a reference to the constuction of the shrine by the Kacchapaghāta ruler Devapāla, known to have been in power between 1055-1075, at which time the Kacchapaghātas had thrown off Candella overlordship and were ruling Gwalior as independent kings. The inscription itself seems to have been added some 250 years after the construction of the temple. In the early 14th century, the Rajput Kacchavaha rulers were dominant in the Gwalior region and whenever Delhi showed signs of weakness, these rulers asserted themselves and threw off the Muslim imperial yoke. Assuming that the temple was built in the 11th century, it is certain that under Kacchavaha rule, the shrine was further



Mitauli collanade revealing doorways into its cells

embellished or restored, or it was given some substantial donation, thus providing an occasion for the 1323 inscription. Possibly, the decorative carving on the exterior walls of the temple (which seems disproportionately small in comparison to the conception of the large circular enclosure) was added at this time. We shall see later that a similar vexing situation on dating arises at another site in the vicinity of Gwalior.[6] The problem at Mitauli, with its fragmentary inscription, is compounded by the total absence of even a single Yoginī image which would have been dateable on the basis of sculptural style. If the Yoginī temple itself was constructed in the early 14th century by a Kacchavaha ruler, it must have been built as a last desperate gesture, invoking these powerful deities to give the monarch all magical powers possible to help in keeping away the foreign Muslim infidels.

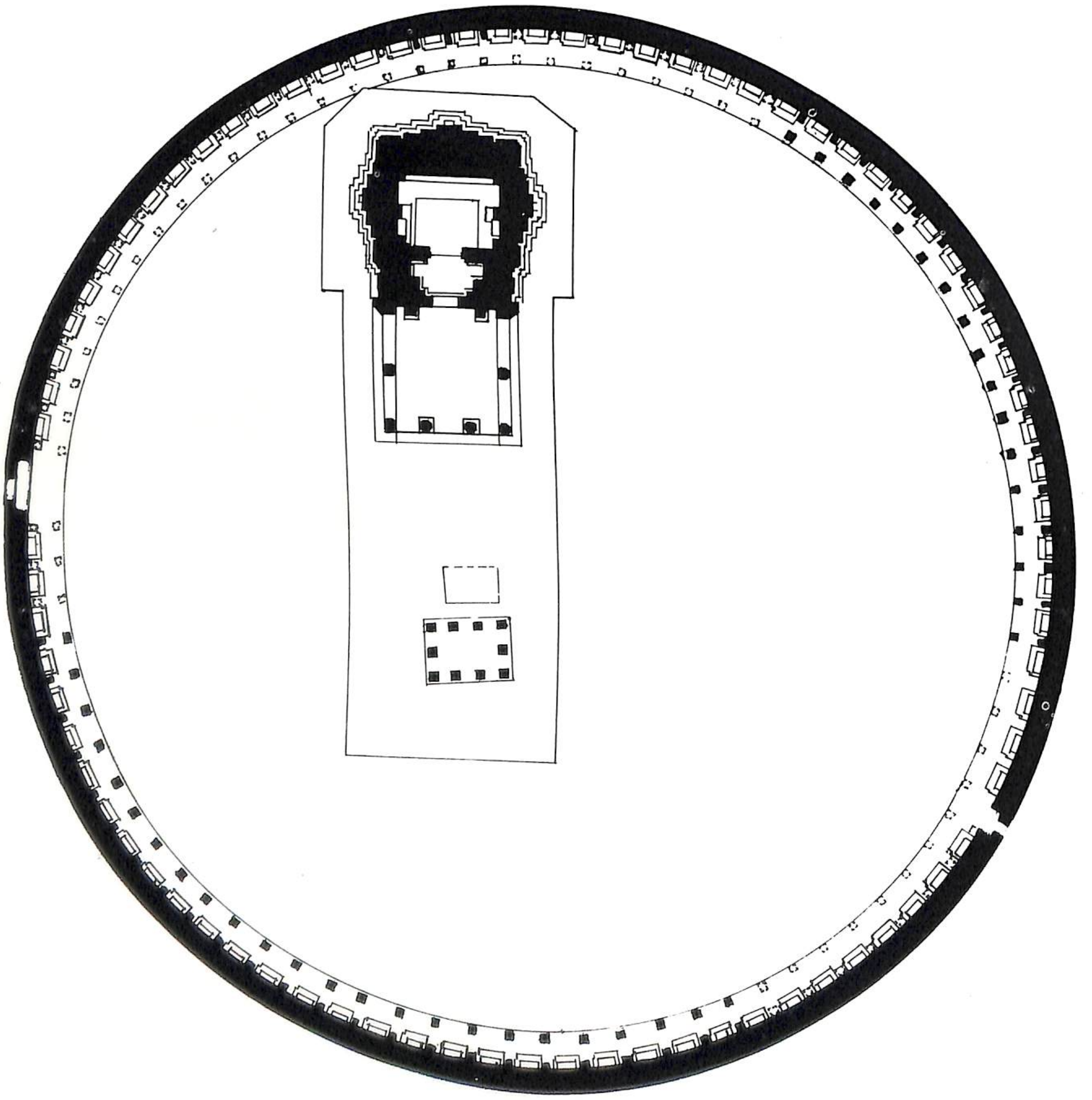
Other epigraphs at Mitauli include an amorous verse inscribed on the outer wall of the main temple, and a verse to the Sun god Sūrya, as well as a salutation to Mahārājā Rai Singh, on a pillar of the central Śiva pavilion. The latest dated inscription is in Hindi and was added in Vikrama *saṁvat* 1560 or A.D. 1503, indicating that in the early 16th century, despite increasing Muslim intervention, the Mitauli Yoginī temple was still in active worship. This was the period of the famous Rājā Man Singh (1497-1517), whose success both in war and peace made Gwalior justly famous.

7. Bheraghat: A Temple of the Eighty-One Yoginīs

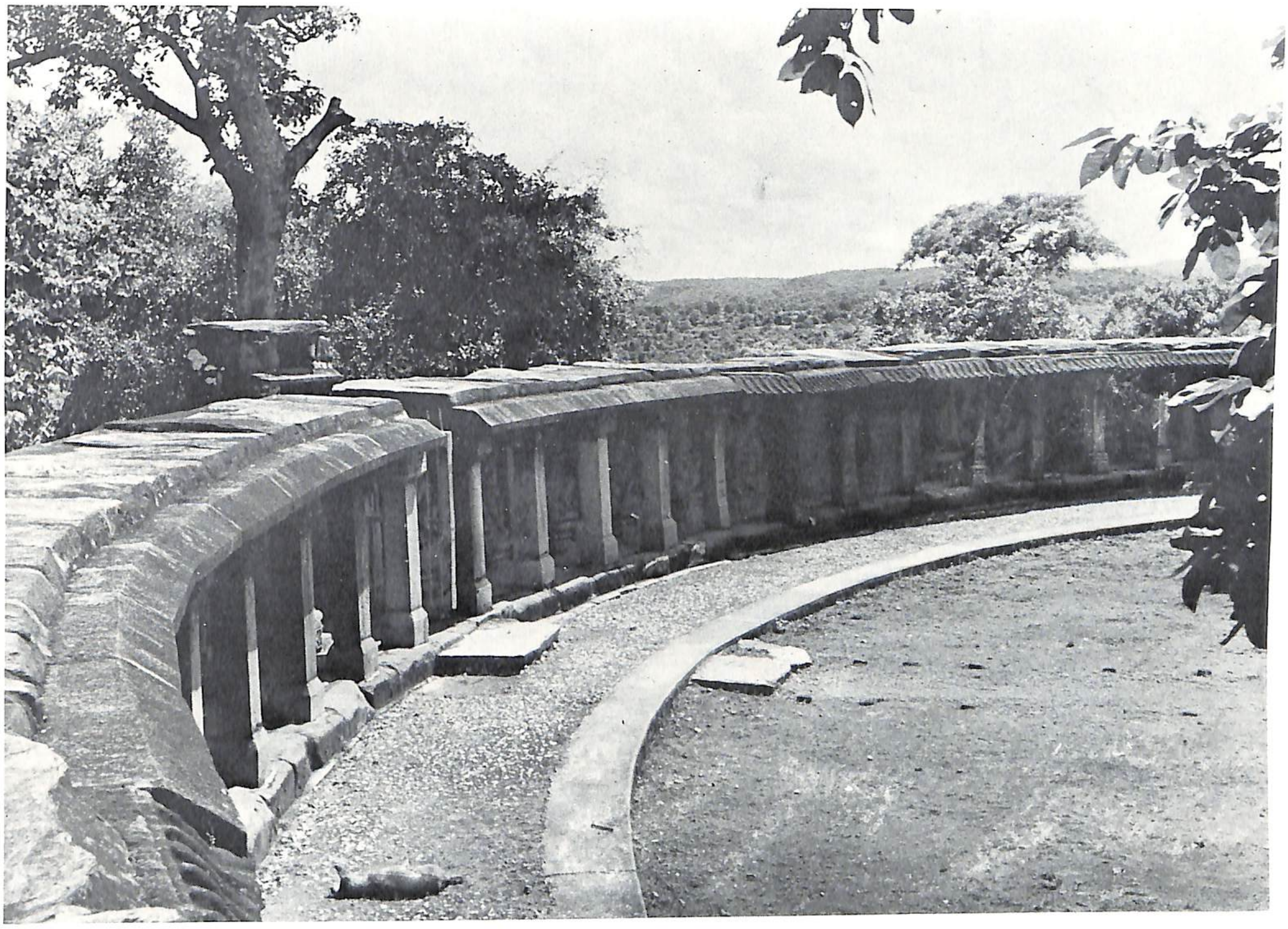
Located on top of a hill at Bheraghat near Jabalpur, and overlooking the river Narmada, is a large circular Yoginī temple containing eighty-one niches for the placement of eighty-one images. This variation in the number of Yoginīs (eighty-one as opposed to the usual sixty-four) has not particularly disturbed scholars who continue to refer to Bheraghat as a Caunsaṭh or Sixty-four Yoginī temple. As we have seen, however, the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* introduces us to a grouping of *ekāśīti* or eighty-one Yoginīs and clearly indicates that the worship of the eighty-one Yoginīs is specially intended for royalty. This in turn suggests that the temple of eighty-one Yoginīs at Bheraghat is a royal foundation and perhaps in the nature of a royal chapel. The temple and all its

Entrance to Bheraghat temple

images were described in detail by R.D. Banerji in a monograph for the Archaeological Survey of India,[1] and a recent book on the Chaunsatha-Yoginī (sic:) temple of Bheraghat adds nothing to our understanding of this shrine.[2]



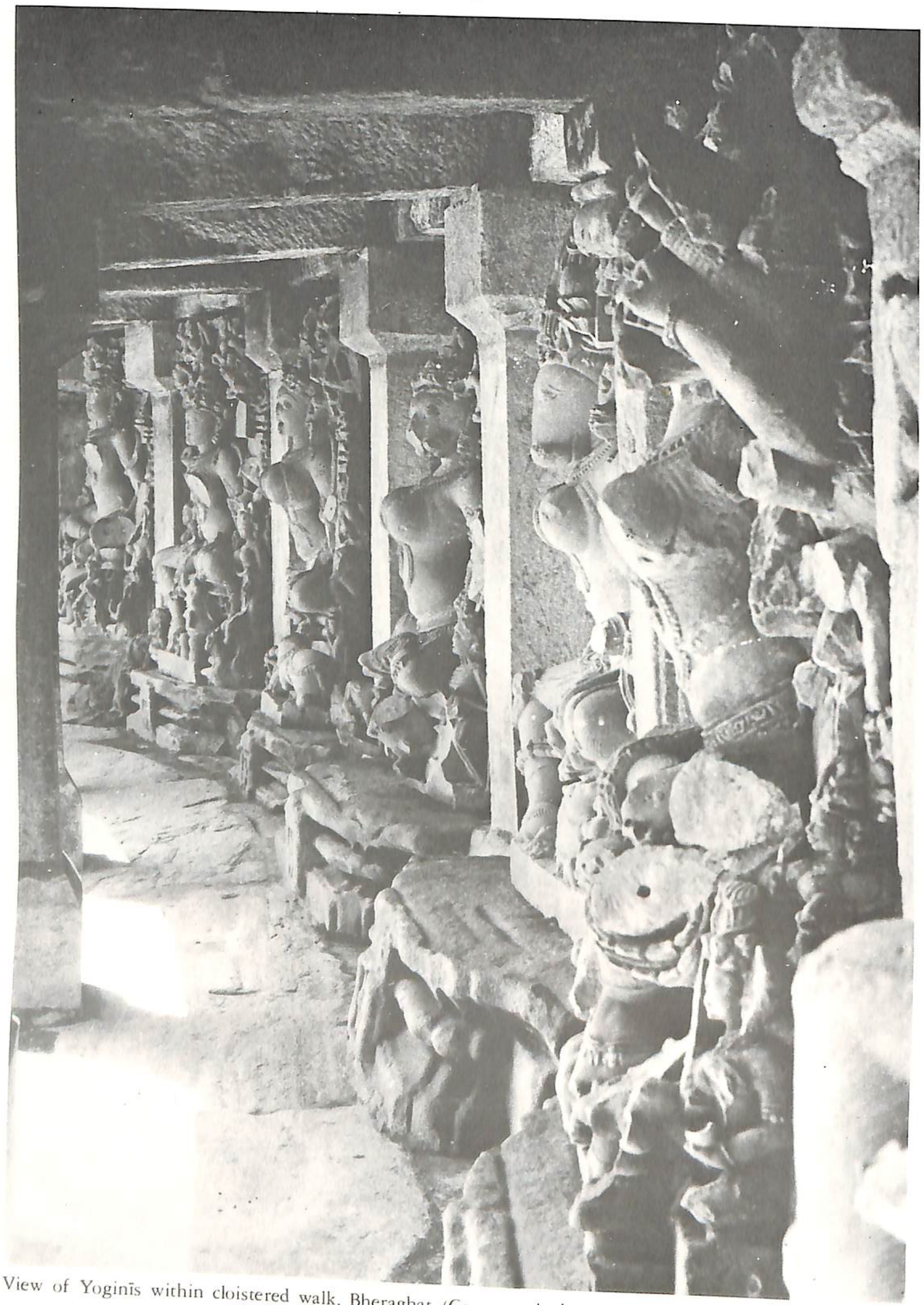
Ground plan of Bheraghat temple



The Bheraghat circle (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Bheraghat is the largest of the Yoginī temples with a diameter of 125 feet. Within is a circular pillared collonade with a flat eave that covers a cloistered walk and also protects the images of the Yoginīs from the elements. There are no signs of the original central shrine, its place having been taken centuries ago by a traditional style temple with *śikhara* and *maṇḍapa,* dedicated to Śiva. This temple, known as the Gaurī-Śaṅkar, is located off-centre within the circular enclosure, and we shall see that it appears to have been built roughly two centuries after the Yoginī temple.

The Bheraghat shrine has suffered greatly at the hands of vandals and many of the eighty-one niches are today bereft of their original Yoginī images. Eight figures of Mātṛkās belonging to an earlier structure were brought into the Yoginī temple and placed in vacant niches. A dancing Gaṇeśa and two male Śaiva images of a style and date contiguous with the Yoginīs, occupy three niches. Clearly they are not part of the Yoginī circle and belong probably to the original central shrine. There are, in addition, a certain number of niches remaining unoccupied and several that contain inscribed pedestals alone. Few of the Bheraghat (Yoginīs) remain in their original positions in the circle, and the majority are extensively damaged. Several are intact only from the waist downwards and even the better preserved figures usually have mutilated faces. Only twenty-four of the eighty-one faces survive to the extent of



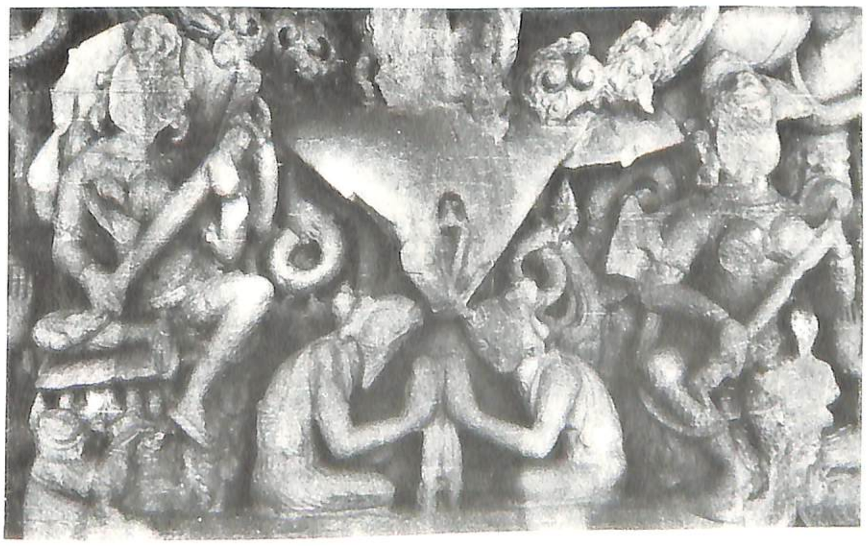
View of Yoginīs within cloistered walk, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

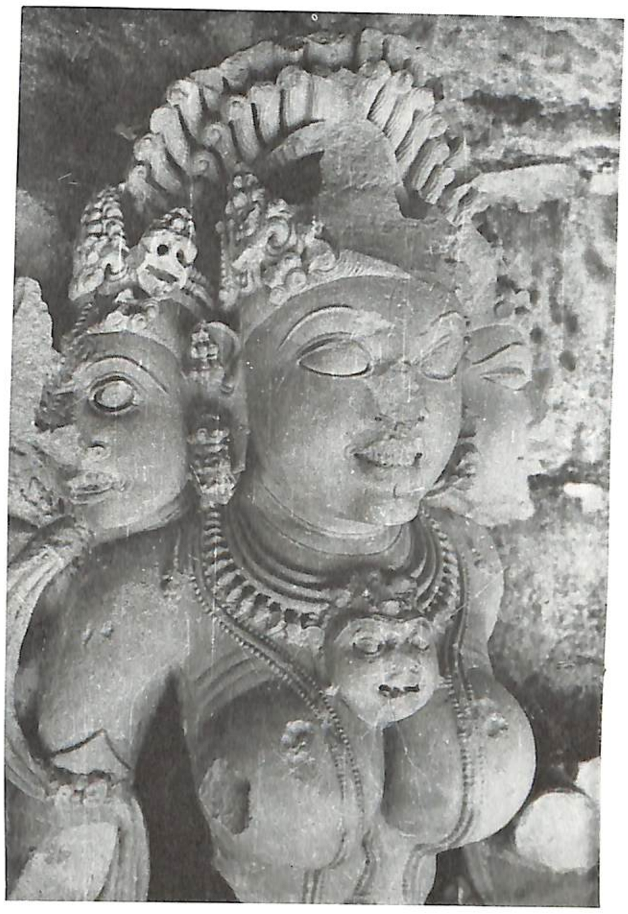
determining whether they are animal or human: of these only horse-faced Eruḍi is in almost pristine condition, all others being partially or totally disfigured.

The Bheraghat Yoginīs form a statuesque seated group, slightly over life-size in dimension. There are no slender, girlish damsels here like those we saw at Hirapur. Bheraghat's Yoginīs are instead mature, voluptuous beauties, generously endowed with ample hips and heavy melon-like breasts that make us realise the validity of the poetic descriptions of the beauty of Pārvatī, burdened by the weight of her breasts. Bereft of an upper garment, the Yoginīs are ornamented with multiple strands of necklaces and garlands, and they wear a variety of armlets, bracelets and earrings. Slung low on their wide hips is a jewelled girdle from which is suspended a transparent skirt that reaches down to their ankles. Often its presence is indicated merely by a line above their jewelled anklets, while at other times the designs of the fabric or its folds are in evidence. Each Yoginī has a halo indicating her divinity and all of them have multiple arms (between four and eighteen), reinforcing their divine status. Their unsmiling countenance adds to their air of quiet dignity and majesty. Each slab is elaborately carved with a series of attendant figures along the base of the slab, a decorated throne against the central background, and groups of flying figures at the top. There is an inscribed label along the base, and the entire slab is placed upon a moulded pedestal that raises it well off the ground.

Bheraghat, it may be stressed, is a temple of the eighty-one Yoginīs—a fact that has been glossed over without recognition or comment in a recent book on the temple.[3] Since all known textual tradition associates the number 64 with the Yoginīs, it was particularly rewarding to discover in the Nepal manuscripts of the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* a description of a specific grouping of *ekāśīti* or 81 Yoginīs. Details of this grouping, known as the *Mūla Cakra,* have been given in a previous chapter,[4] and we shall only recapitulate briefly here. The *Mūla Cakra* revolves around the concept of nine Mātṛkās instead of eight. The seven familiar figures, Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī and Cāmuṇḍā are joined by Caṇḍikā and Mahālakṣmī to form the nine Mātṛkās. Each Mātṛkā is considered to be a Yoginī and she is associated with a group of eight other Yoginīs, resulting in a grouping of eighty-one (nine times nine). It appears to be this tradition of *ekāśīti* Yoginīs that is followed at Bheraghat. It is not our suggestion that the names of the Bheraghat Yoginīs will be identical to those listed in the *Mūla Cakra* of the *Matottara Tantra,* since the individual names of the Yoginīs appear to depend upon the regional and local tradition. However, Bheraghat does follow the *Mūla Cakra* in grouping its eighty-one Yoginīs around the nine Mātṛkās.

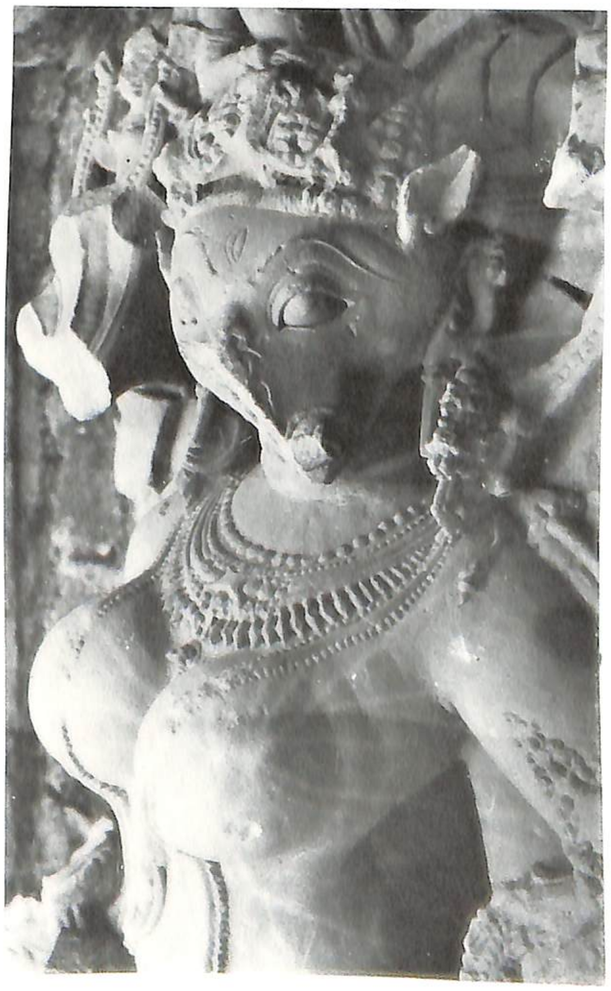
Scene of *yoni pūjā* on pedestal of Yoginī Kāmadā, Bheraghat

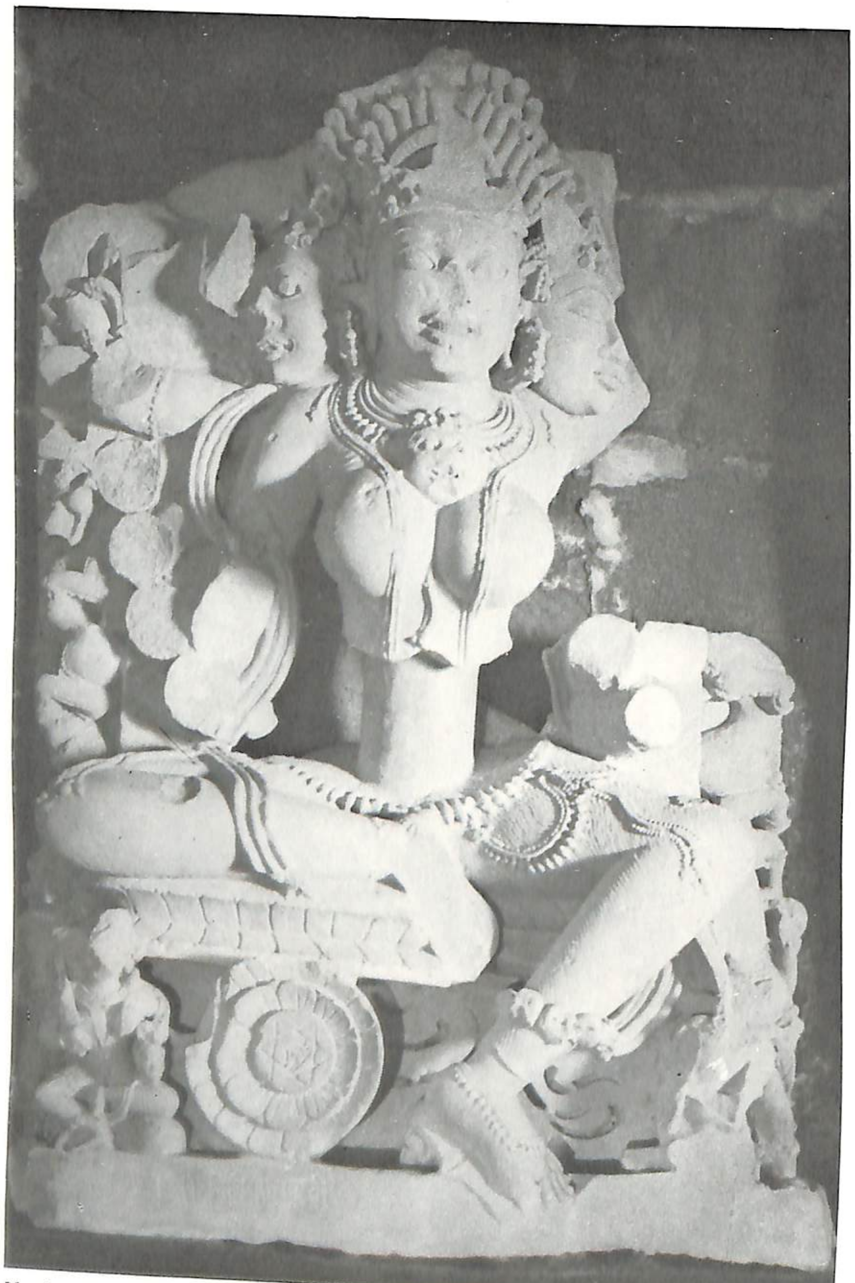




Detail of Sarvatomukhī, Bheraghat

Detail of animal-headed Yoginī, Bheraghat



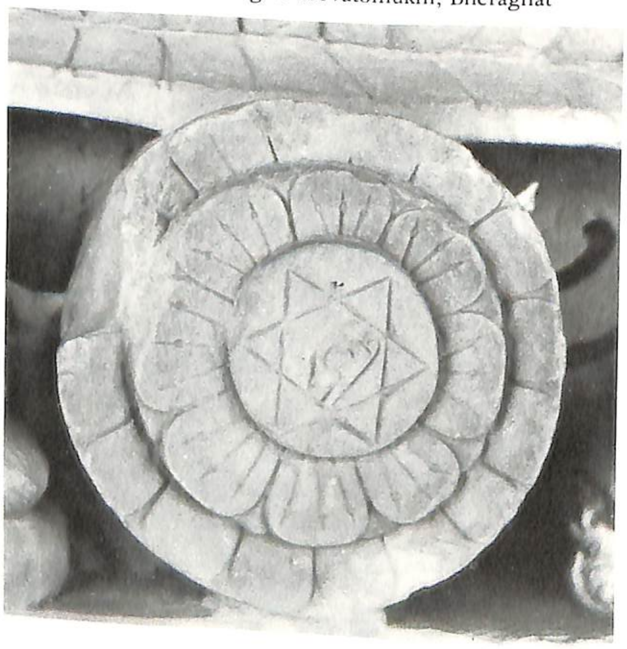


Yoginī Sarvatomukhī, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

Six of the nine Mātṛkās are clearly identifiable by their inscriptions-Vārāhī (No. 11), Caṇḍikā (No. 39), Brahmāṇī (No. 42), Māheśvarī (No. 43), Indrāṇī (No. 55) and Vaiṣṇavī (No. 74). Caṇḍikā does not normally form part of a Mātṛkā grouping and her inclusion at Bheraghat is suggestive of the *Mūla Cakra* tradition. Missing Mātṛkās are Kaumārī, Cāmuṇḍā and Mahālakṣmī, but they could be accounted for among the missing images, or among some of the badly damaged figures with obliterated inscriptions, of which the Yoginī placed in niche 48 could be Cāmuṇḍā, while the figure in niche 21 could be Mahālakṣmī. The inscribed image of Kaumārī recovered recently from Mandla, appears to be from this temple.[5]

The regal presence of the Bheraghat Yoginīs suggests that these deities are either highly placed acolytes of Devī or aspects of the Great Goddess herself. One of the Bheraghat Yoginīs is named Kāmadā or "Giver of Love", and below her lotus seat is an explicit scene of *yoni pūjā* or worship of the female vulva, with figures of

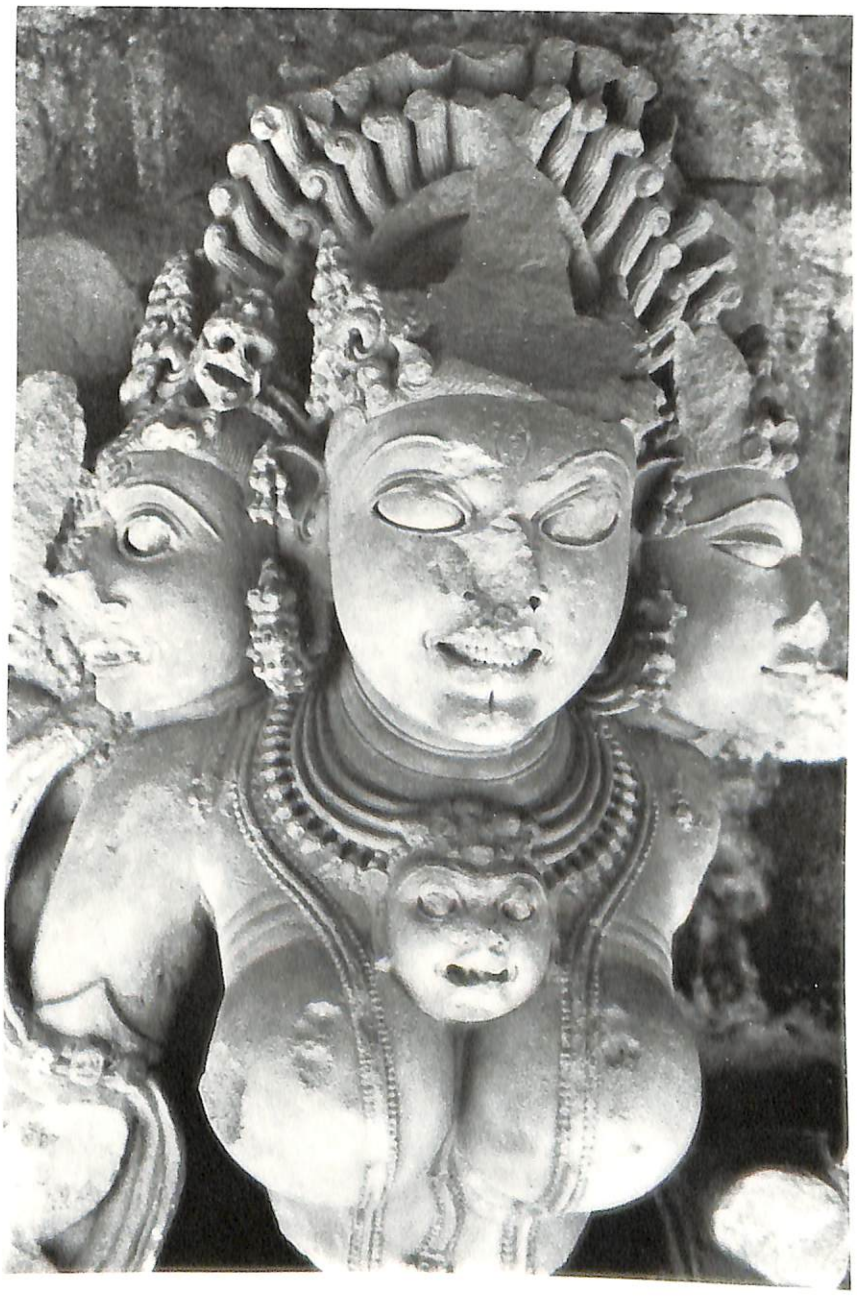
Cakra on pedestal of Yoginī Sarvatomukhī, Bheraghat

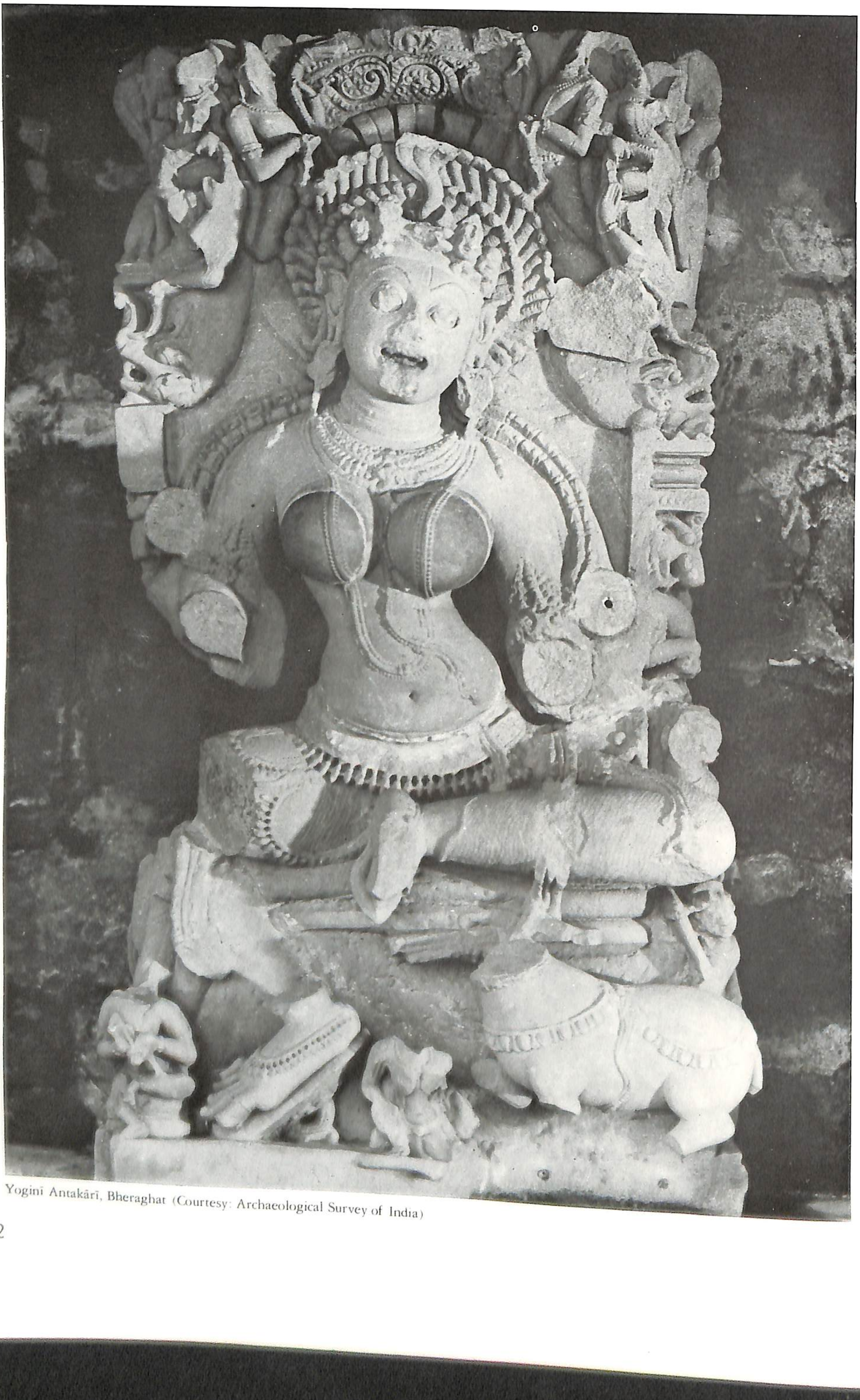


attendants, devotees and musicians. Kāmadā is one of the names of Devī in the *Kālikā Purāṇa,* where *kāma* is identified with sexual love, and it is specifically stated that Kāmadā takes away *jāḍya* or frigidity.[6] The Yoginī Kāmadā is indeed the deity who gives sexual enjoyment.

Sarvatomukhī or "She who faces in all directions" is reminiscent of the title Viśvatomukhī, one of the thousand names of Devī in the *Lalitā Sahasranāma.*[7] Bheraghat's Yoginī Sarvatomukhī is seen with three faces, of which the central one displays extraordinarily large teeth in an open mouth, and the face to the left reveals fangs. A tiara of skulls, a long garland of skulls and a massive skull pendant, together with hair standing up all round her head like a halo, adds to the general fearsome effect. Female attendants hold a severed human head, a sword, a skull-cup and a curved knife. Carved at the base is the *cakra* for the special worship of Sarvatomukhī, consisting of the *mantra 'hrīm'* inscribed within a star, circled by an eight-petalled and then a sixteen-petalled lotus.

Yoginī Sarvatomukhī

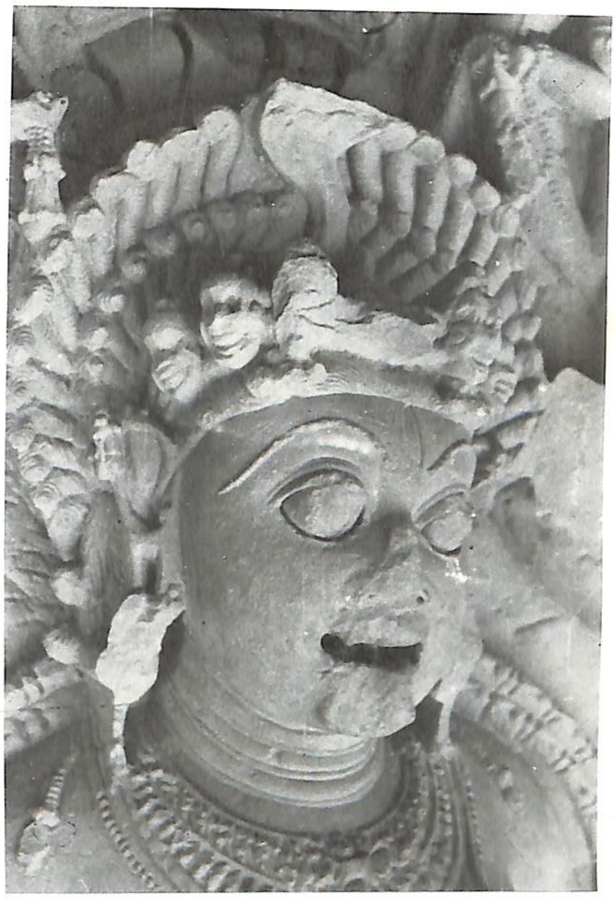




Yoginī Antakārī, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

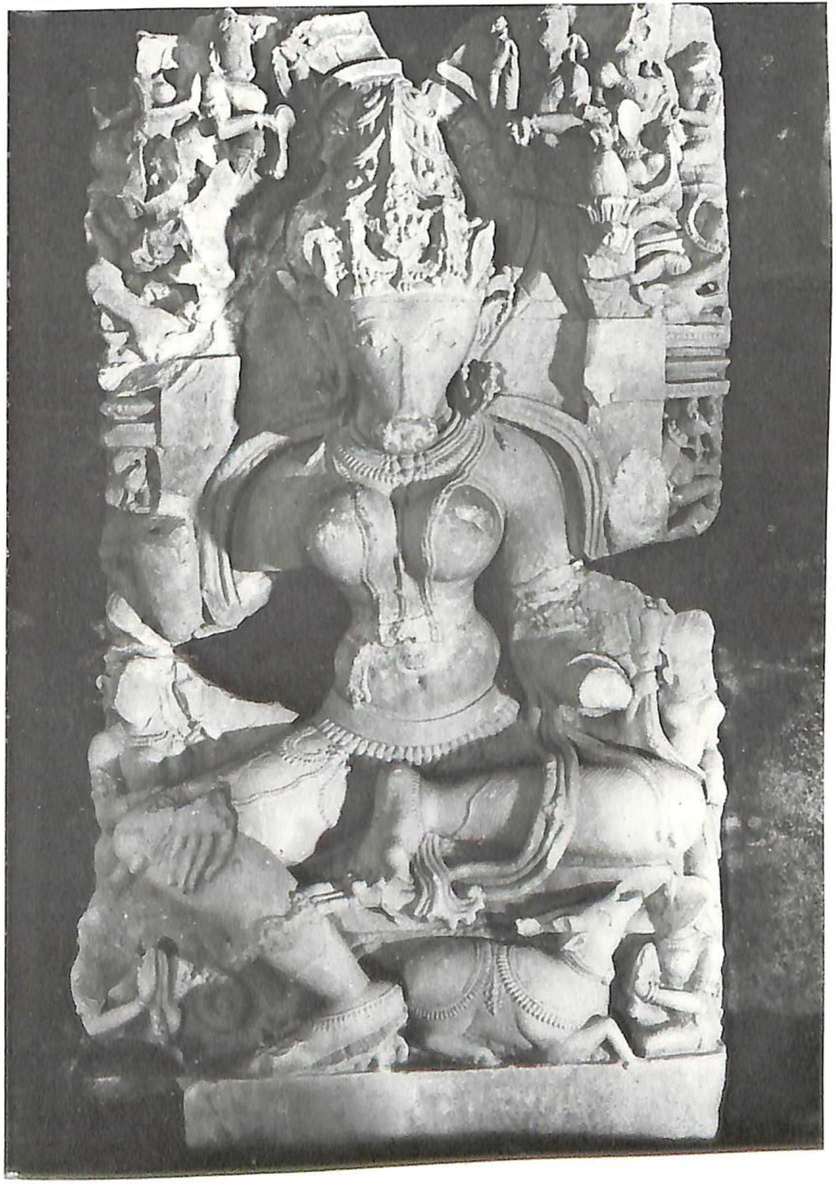
Mantras, sounds arranged in a particular set pattern, express the essence of a deity. A *bīja mantra* such as *hrīm* is the seed or essence of a *mantra;* one might call it a *mantra* in shorthand. It is repeatedly emphasized in the tantras that a *mantra* must not be uttered except for specific purposes and then only by those who understand its power and significance, as its repetition is said to bring about automatic results. It is only the sound of the *mantra* that is potent. Writing it down as is done on this sculpture, or mouthing it silently as the viewer may do, are both permissable.

Śrī Antakārī (She who destroys) has the most exquisitely formed body that contrasts with her fearsome face. With open mouth, protruding rounded eyeballs and a tiara of skulls placed upon a headdress of snakes, she is an awe-inspiring aspect of the Goddess. Horse-faced Eruḍi is of slender form with high breasts, narrow waist widening gently into broad hips, and here as at Hirapur, the animal head scarcely detracts from the sensuality and nubility of the figure. The elephant-headed Yoginī, seen also at Hirapur, Ranipur-Jharial and Rikhiyan, is here name Ainginī, and she has an elephant-headed male as *vāhana.* Śrī Indrajālī (She who knows magic) is an interesting figure and it is unfortunate that her head is missing. She has an elephant as mount, and her skeletal attendants

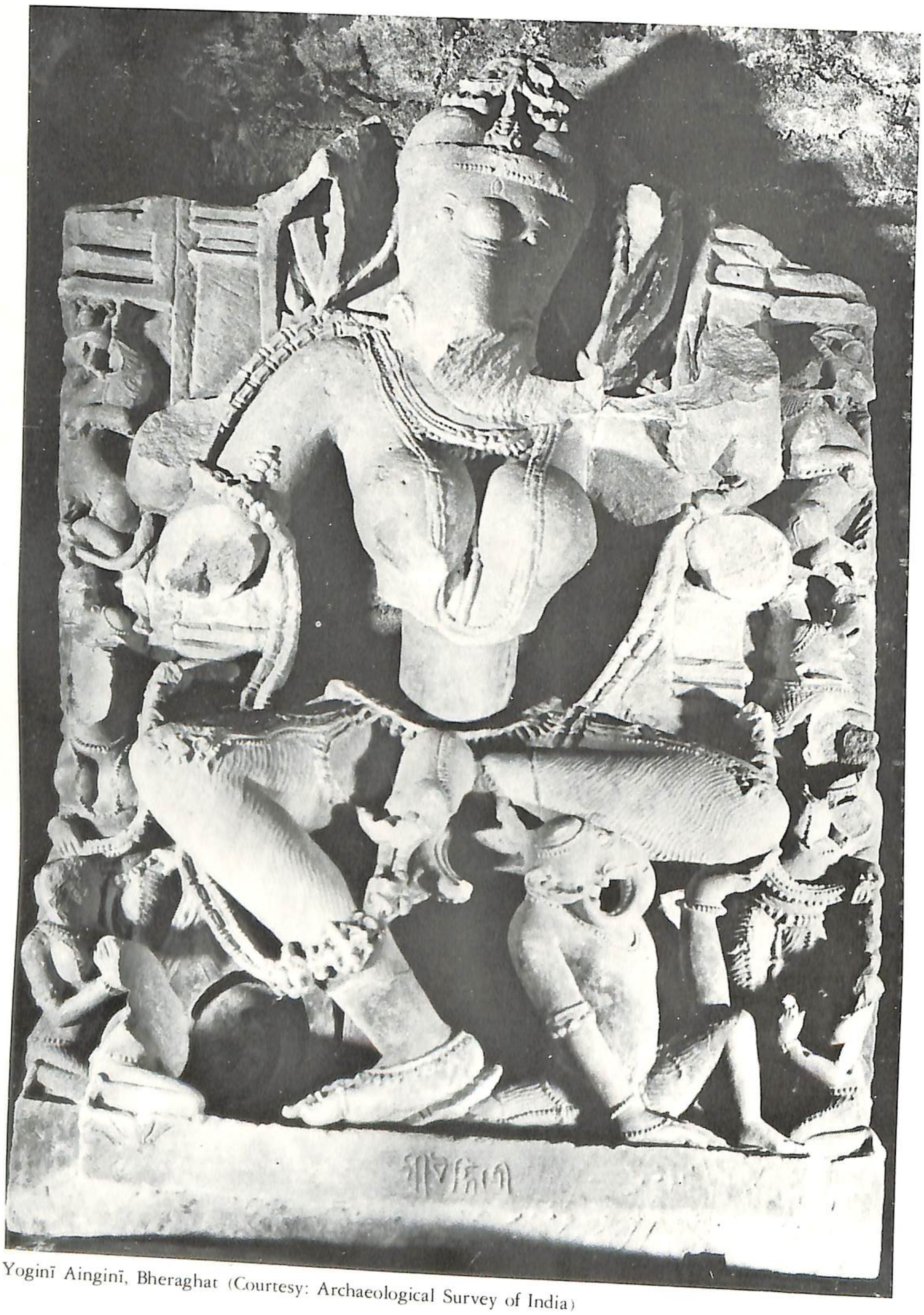


Detail of Yoginī Antakārī

Yoginī Eruḍi, Bheraghat



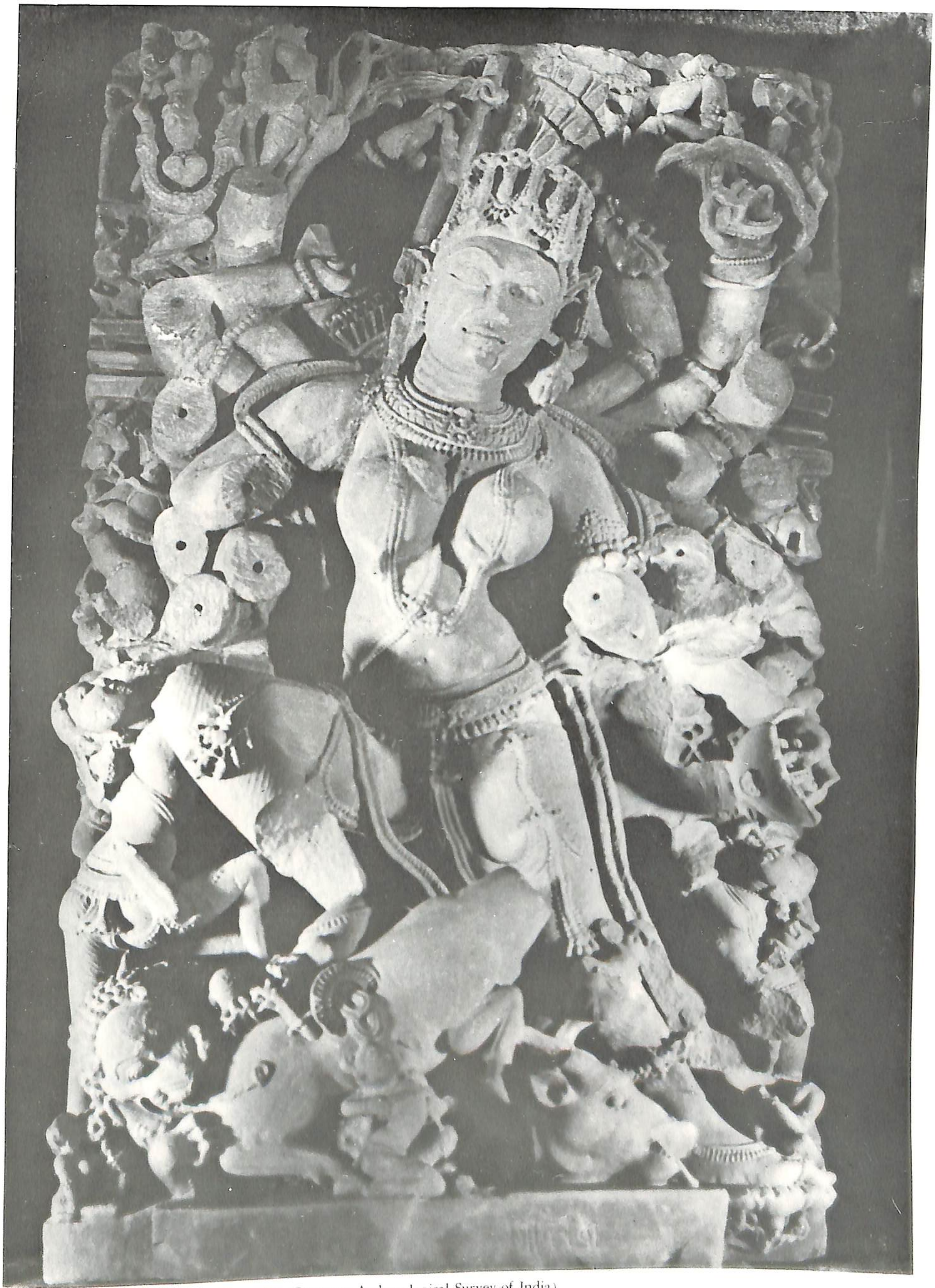
Detail of Eruḍi



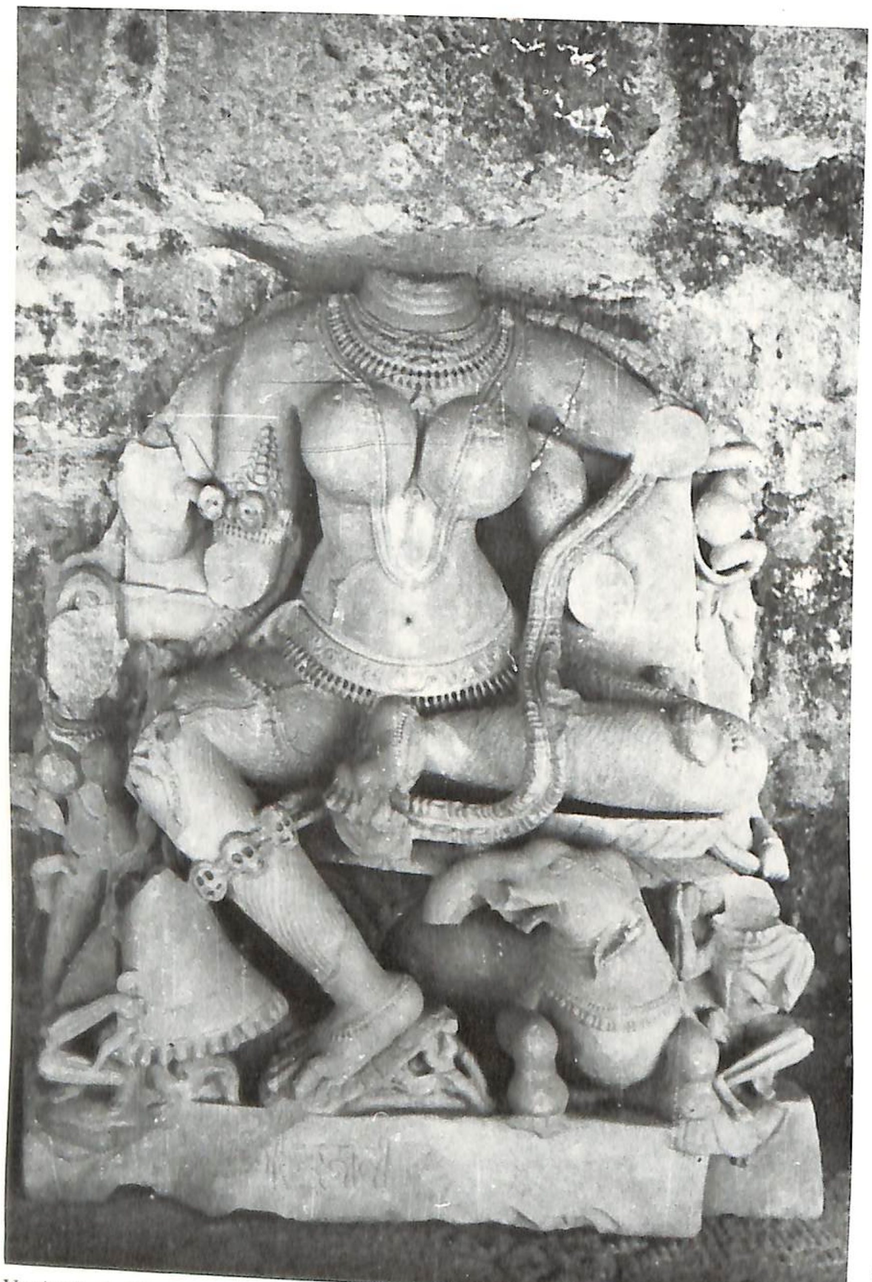
Yoginī Ainginī, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

hold skull-cups and curved knives, while one holds a gigantic bell. Śrī Phaṇendrī (She of the Serpents) with snake hoods behind her head, has a reclining male as mount. The river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, generally not included among the sixty-four, are present among the eighty-one Yoginīs. Śrī Jāhnavī or Gaṅgā is on her familiar *makara vāhana* and Śrī Yamunā is on her tortoise.

There are two standing Yoginīs in the Bheraghat circle of otherwise seated figures. Śrī Teramvā, an 18-armed Yoginī, stands with one foot planted firmly on the ground and the other placed on the back of a decapitated buffalo whose head lies on the ground



Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī Teramvā, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

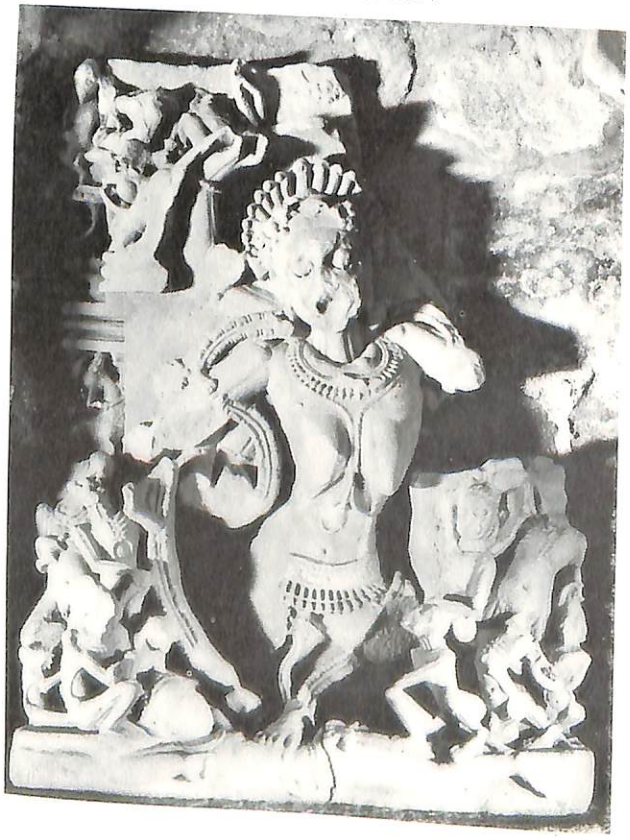


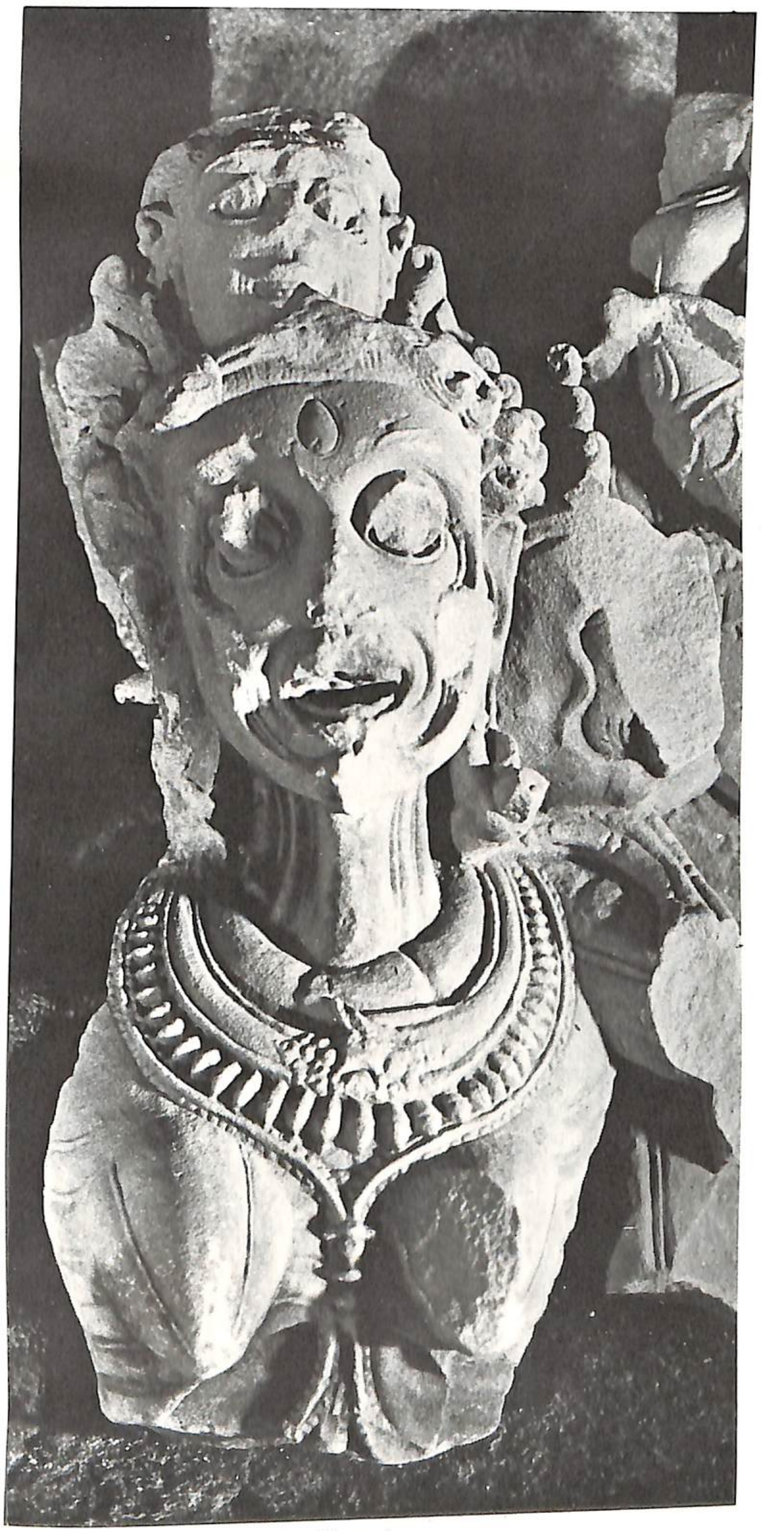
Yoginī Indrajālī, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

below. Teramvā is clearly the local name for the Brahmanical Mahiṣamardinī. Śrī Caṇḍikā, the other standing Yoginī, has her feet placed upon a reclining male figure. With a gaping mouth, sunken eyeballs, prominent tendons, drooping breasts and hollow stomach, she is fearsome to behold. A garland of skulls with a snake at its centre, adorns her breasts. With two hands Caṇḍikā holds aloft an elephant skin[8] and she is surrounded by a host of skeletal males one of whom holds a severed human head.

In our discussion on cult practices we saw that *śava sādhanā* or rituals associated with corpses appears to have formed part of Yoginī cult rites. Several Bheraghat Yoginīs reveal an association with severed human heads, skull-cups, curved knives and skulls. An indication that *śava sādhanā* occasionally included the consumption of the flesh of corpses is seen from the attendant figures of Śrī Siṁhasiṁha (No. 2): a standing skeletal male is eating a human hand while a second devours a human leg. Among the skeletal male

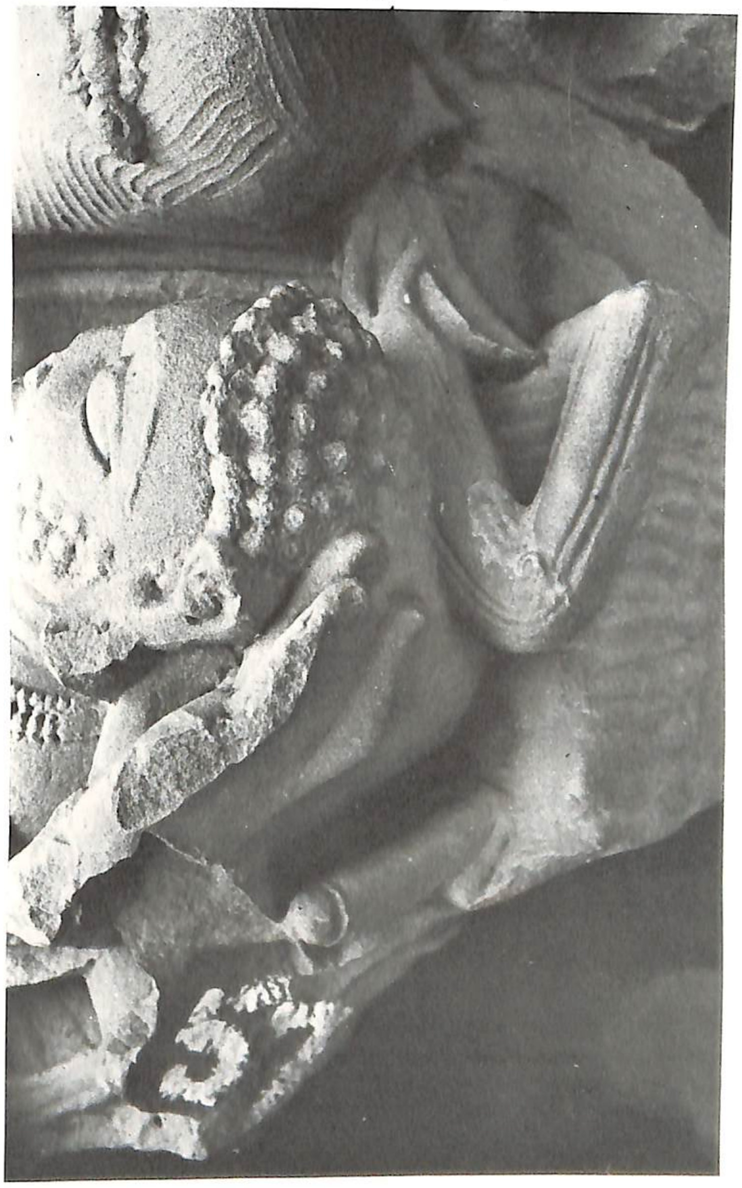
Yoginī Caṇḍikā, Bheraghat
(broken torso placed on broken lower half)





Fragment of fearsome Yoginī, Bheraghat

Attendant figures on pedestal of Yoginī Vibhatsa,



attendants and worshippers are several shown with a prominently erect phallus, as among the figures surrounding Śrī Vībhatsā (Dreadful One, No. 10) or Śrī Bhīṣaṇī (Terrifying One, No. 75). We have earlier wondered whether such figures are an indication of ritual copulation forming part of Yoginī cult rites.

Date and Builders of the Temple

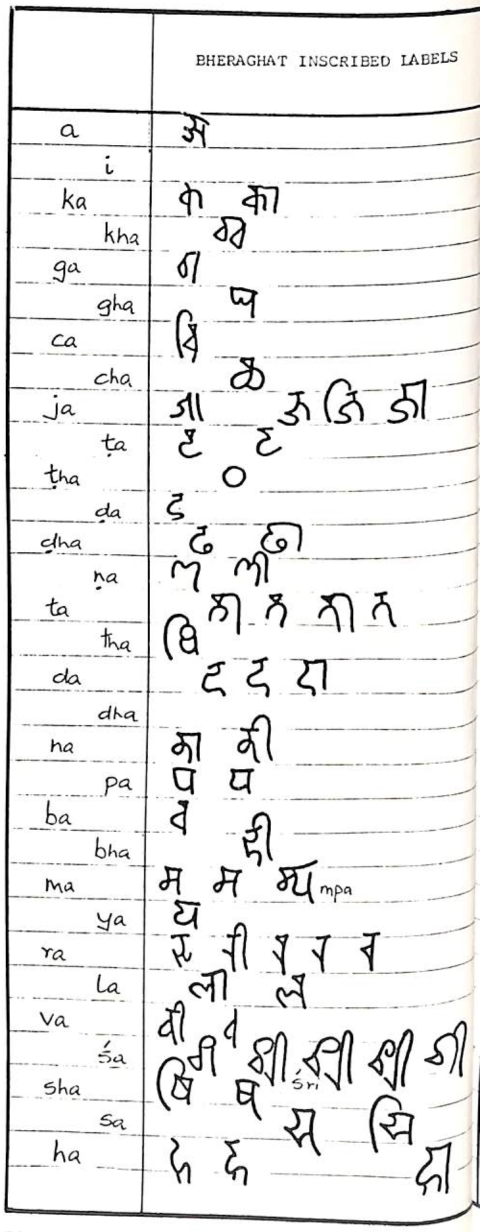
There are three sets of inscriptons relating to the Bheraghat temple that require consideration. The stone inscription of the Kalacuri king Narasiṁha[9] of the year 907 or A.D. 1156, has been interpreted to indicate that queen Alhaṇadevī built the Gaurī-Śaṅkar temple that stands today within the circle of the Yoginī temple. However, the inscription is on an isolated slab of stone that is in no way connected with the Yoginī temple, and was not even found within the temple. It states that Narasiṁha's mother, queen Alhaṇadevī, widow of Gayakarṇa, constructed the Śiva temple of Vaidyanātha, and also a monastery and a hall of study, and that in addition, she set aside the income from two villages for the support of the deity of the Vaidyanātha temple. None of this seems to have any connection with the temple within the Yoginī circle, and we shall hence disregard this record.

The second record, the Gaurī-Śaṅkar inscription of the Kalacuri monarch Vijayasiṁha,[10] is pertinent to the Bheraghat enclosure. It is engraved on the right side of the doorway of the Gaurī-Śaṅkar temple within the Yoginī enclosure. The inscription contains no date, but since the last known date of the previous ruler Jayasiṁha is the year 940 or A.D. 1189, we may assume that this record dates to A.D. 1190 or soon thereafter. The inscription records the devotion of queen Gosaladevī and her two sons, Mahārāja Vijayasiṁha and prince Ajayasiṁha to the god enshrined within the temple, who is named Bhagnakhidra or "Destroyer of diseases". It seems possible that the temple itself was constructed soon after A.D. 1190 as a thanksgiving for the recovery of the queen or her two sons from some serious illness, and it must have replaced the original central pavilion.

The third set of inscriptions comprise, of course, the labels inscribed along the pedestals of the Yoginī images. Palaeographically, these records are closely akin to several others that belong to the end of the 10th century. The style of writing seems more developed than that seen in the inscriptions of Lakshmaṇarāja I of the Kalacuri year 593 or A.D. 842.[11] The triangular headmark that was in evidence at that date has largely given way at Bheraghat to the line headmark that was to become the standard Nāgarī form. The labels are closely akin to the Candrehe inscription of Prabodhaśiva of *saṁvat* 724 or A.D. 973,[12] to the Deval *praśasti* of A.D. 993,[13] and to the inscriptions of Vākpatirāja of A.D. 974.[14] On the basis of palaeography, we would suggest that the Bheraghat Yoginī temple was constructed somewhere between A.D. 975-1025.

A stylistic comparison of the Bheraghat Yoginīs with the images carved on the Khajuraho temples that mostly belong between 950-1050, lends support to this late 10th century date for Bheraghat. The figures at Khajuraho and Bheraghat reveal a similar idiom once we have made allowance for the static seated position assigned to each Bheraghat goddess in contrast to the fluid lines of movement seen in the standing damsels at Khajuraho. The sculptors at both sites had a penchant for the boldly carved, full and statuesque female form, and at both Bheraghat and Khajuraho there is an assured elegance in the treatment of these voluptuous figures (although Khajuraho also has some slender young girls). The manner of dress and ornamentation is closely akin and it seems evident that the two sets of carvings belong to roughly the same period of time.

Our discussion of the *Mūla Cakra* revealed that the blessings


BHERAGHAT INSCRIBED LABELS
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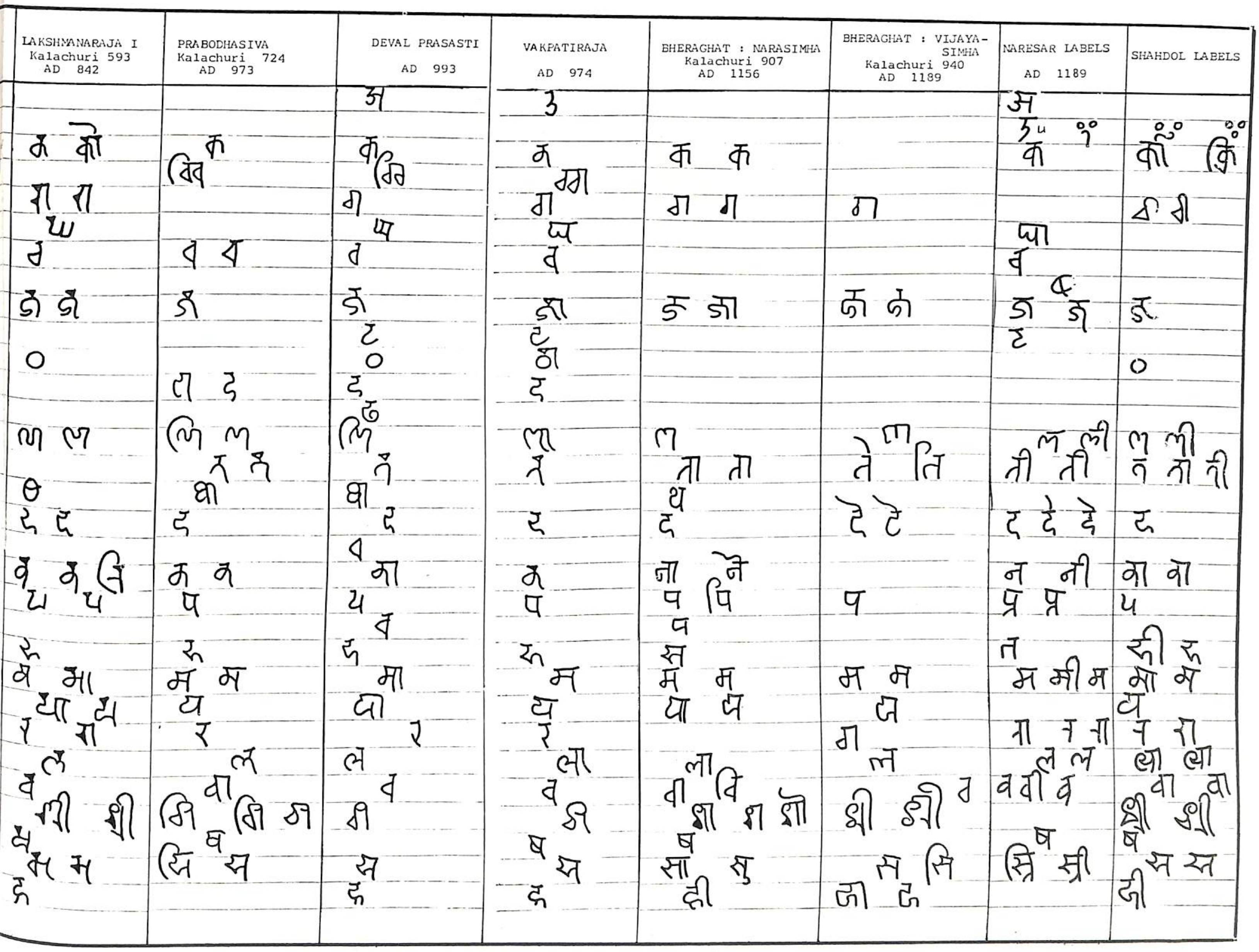
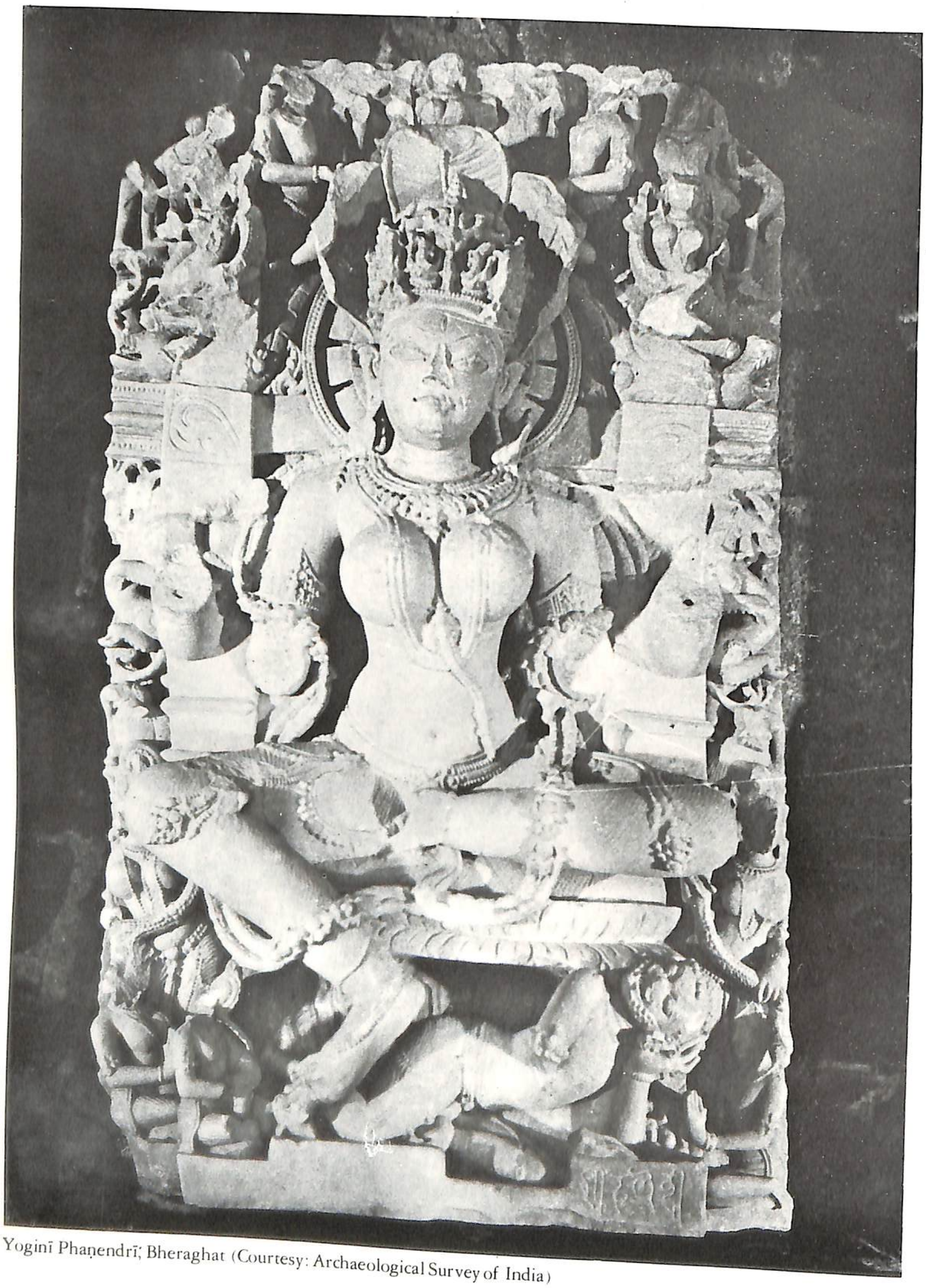
Bheraghat Palaeographic Chart


LAKSHMANARAJA I Kalachuri 593 AD 842
PRABODHASIVA Kalachuri 724 AD 973
DEVAL PRASASTI AD 993
VAKPATIRAJA AD 974
BHERAGHAT : NARASIMHA Kalachuri 907 AD 1156
BHERAGHAT : VIJAYA-SIMHA Kalachuri 940 AD 1189
NARESAR LABELS AD 1189
SHAHDOL LABELS

accrueing from the worship of the eighty-one Yoginīs are such as to benefit royalty and nobility and are mostly inapplicable to the common man. In our consideration of the historical milieu of the Yoginī temples, we suggested that this shrine of the eighty-one Yoginīs was built by one of the Kalacuri monarchs wishing to establish dynastic stability, and we discarded the suggestion that the *Golakī maṭha* (circular monastery) built by Yuvarāja I (A.D. 915-945) is to be identified with the circular Yoginī temple. In view of the sculptural and palaeographic evidence on dating, the monarch responsible for the construction of this temple may have been Yuvarāja II who ruled in the last quarter of the 10th century. Since the Kalacuri capital of Tripuri is barely four miles from Bheraghat, the Yoginī temple may well have been in the nature of a royal chapel. Realising that his political position was insecure, and in the face of the Paramāra threat to his kingdom, Yuvarāja II may have decided to propitiate the eighty-one Yoginīs, beseeching their assistance in defending his territories, banishing his foes, securing victory in battle and in his bid for a rival kingdom. The Yoginīs, incidentally, do not seem to have responded to his plea, since Yuvarāja II lost his throne and had to flee for his life in a major battle against the Paramāras.



Yoginī Phaṇendrī, Bheraghat (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)

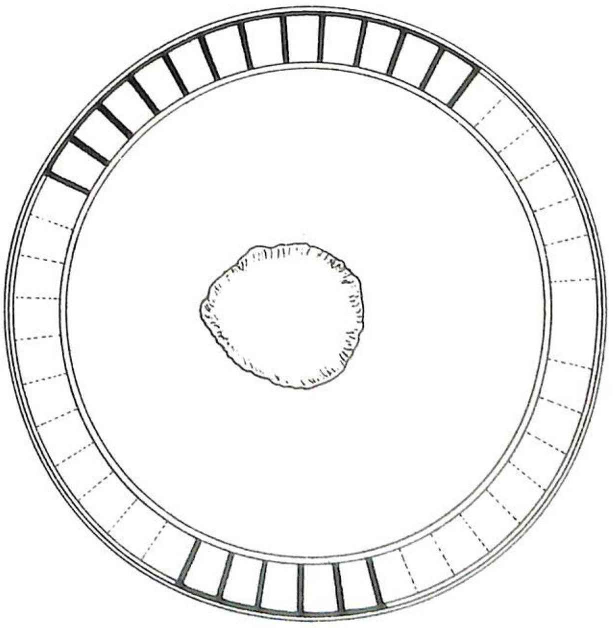
8. Temples of the Forty-Two Yoginīs

Yoginīs were generally worshipped in a group of sixty-four and temples with niches to house 64 images are the most prevalent. However, as we have just seen with the eighty-one goddesses of Bheraghat, certain other numerical groupings of Yoginīs were also considered potent. Forty-two was one such number and central India possesses two temples dedicated to the forty-two Yoginīs, at Dudahi and Badoh. In an earlier chapter we discussed the possible significance of the Bhūtalipi which is a specialised and magical arrangement of forty-two letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.[1] Bhūtalipi texts specify that the goddesses of these letters must be appropriately worshipped, but give no further details. We have also discussed the Mātṛkā Cakra and the Mālinī Cakra, two other instances of the personifications of Sanskrit letters and the worship of such personified goddesses in a circular formation. Temples of the forty-two Yoginīs may possibly have housed the forty-two personified Bhūtalipi goddesses. No published information may be found on such temples, since the existence of shrines of the forty-two Yoginīs has not so far been recognised.

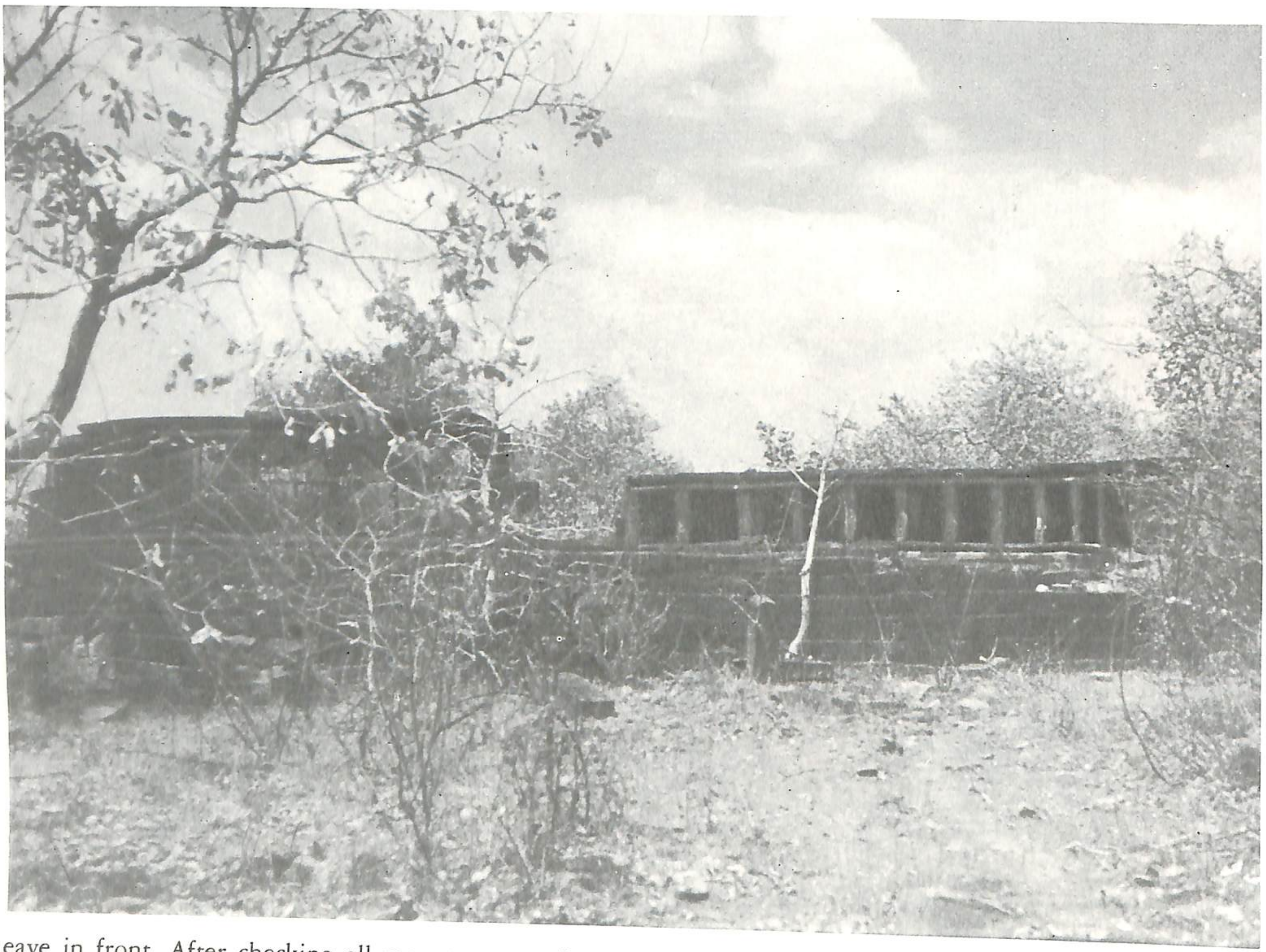
Dudahi's circular Yoginī Temple

About twenty miles from the town of Lalitpur in central India is the small village of Dudahi, beyond which may be seen the extensive ruins of the once prosperous old town of that name. It was a flourishing centre under the Candella rulers and sufficiently important for the monarchs to build several temples at the site, just as they did at Khajuraho, along the banks of an artificial tank. The temples are dedicated to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and to the Jain faith, and more than one large Varāha image still stands midst the ruins. The inscriptions at Dudahi are all in the Brahmā temple, and these tell us that the shrine was built by Devalabdhi, grandson of king Yaśovarman Candella.[2] This temple, and perhaps most of the others, appear to have been built around A.D. 1000.

Standing in isolation on the top of a mound some distance away from the main centre of religious activity, is Dudahi's circular Yoginī temple. Known locally as *akhada,* it is built of large evenly laid blocks of sandstone and is today in a sad state of ruin with only two segments of the circle still standing. It has a diameter of fifty feet and there is evidence of a fairly wide entranceway leading up to it. Each individual cell commences halfway up the stone wall and is three feet high and three feet in width, with a curved sloping ribbed



Plan of temple of forty-two Yoginis at Dudahi



Dudahi's Yoginī temple

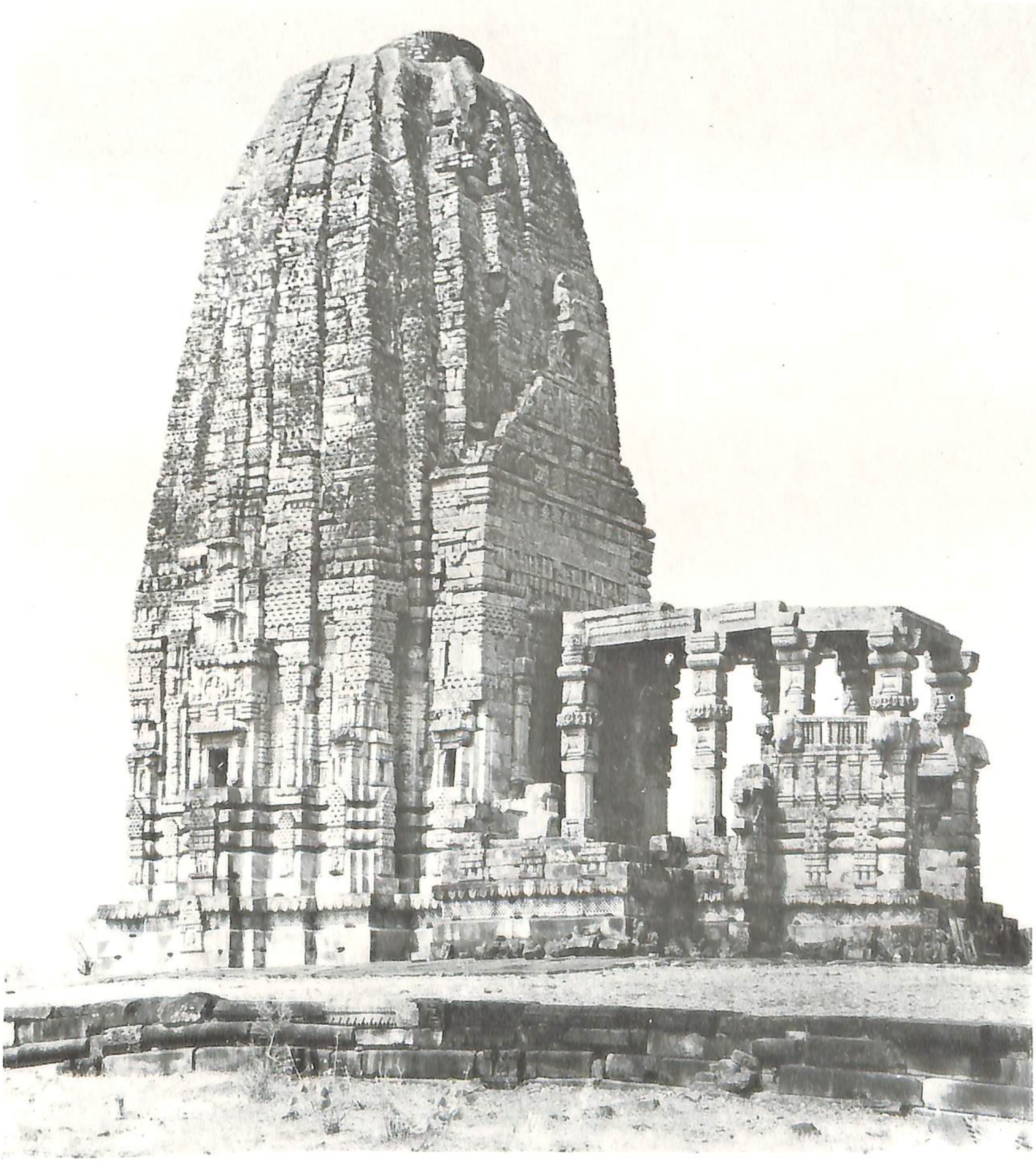
eave in front. After checking all measurements, I can say with certainty that this is a temple with exactly forty-two cells. Unfortunately, no traces remain of the Yoginī images that were once placed within these cells, and we have little evidence on which to try and date the shrine. The best we can do is to suggest that it probably belonged to the same period of Candella activity which witnessed the growth of the town.

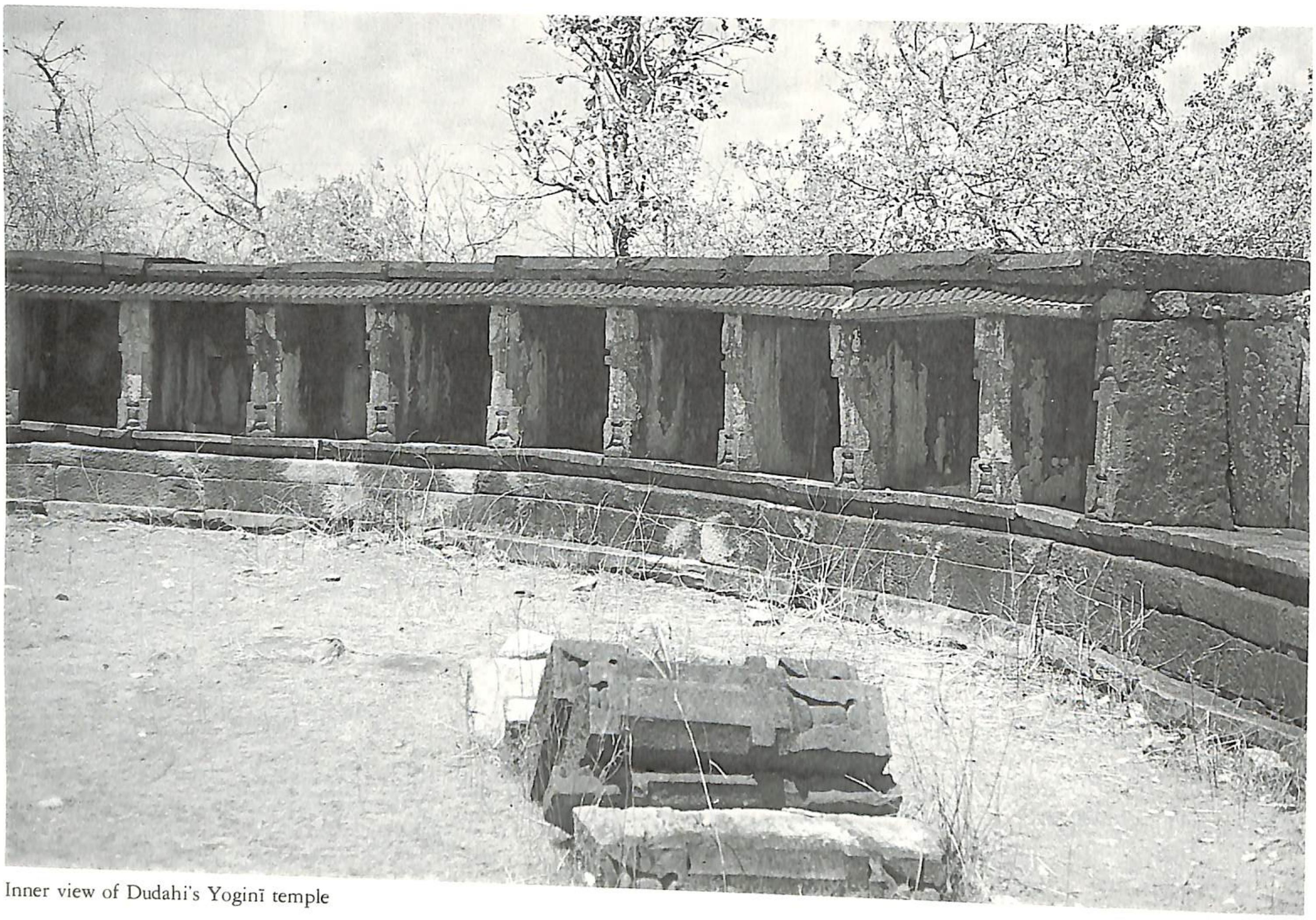
Badoh's rectangular Gadarmal Temple

Only thirty miles south of Dudahi is the town of Badoh with its Gadarmal temple of the Mothers, which seems to have been another temple of the forty-two Yoginīs, and in this case, a rectangular one. The present-day villages of Badoh and Pathari, barely a mile apart, were once a single large township with two large tanks and several temples along their banks. As at Dudahi, here too we find temples to Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇeśa and to the Jain Tīrthaṅkaras.

The Gadarmal as we view it today, consists of a rectangular shrine surmounted by a massive *śikhara,* with a small porch in front. The *śikhara,* made up of carved blocks apparently collected from ruined Hindu and Jain temples in the vicinity, is patently a later addition. The disproportionately large rectangular shrine has a raised platform along its sides, and propped up on this are eighteen fragmentary images of goddesses, partially preserved from the waist down. The platform has exactly forty-two grooves into which the tenons at the base of these images once fitted.[3] It seems that, like Dudahi, this was another temple of the forty-two Yoginīs,[4] although this one followed a rectangular plan. We have seen that such a plan, though not the most prevalent, was not unknown in the context of the Yoginī temples. The roof above this temple was added later and originally the Badoh temple must have been hypaethral like the other Yoginī shrines. The few remaining images of the Yoginīs are too fragmentary to aid us in dating this temple. We can only suggest, as in the case of Dudahi, that the Badoh temple, located in territories under the control of the Candellas, was erected during their rule. A date between 950-1100 may be suggested for these two shrines of the forty-two Yoginīs.

Gadarmal temple of the Mothers (with forty-two niches) at Badoh





Inner view of Dudahi's Yoginī temple

9. Four Collections of Yoginīs from Central India

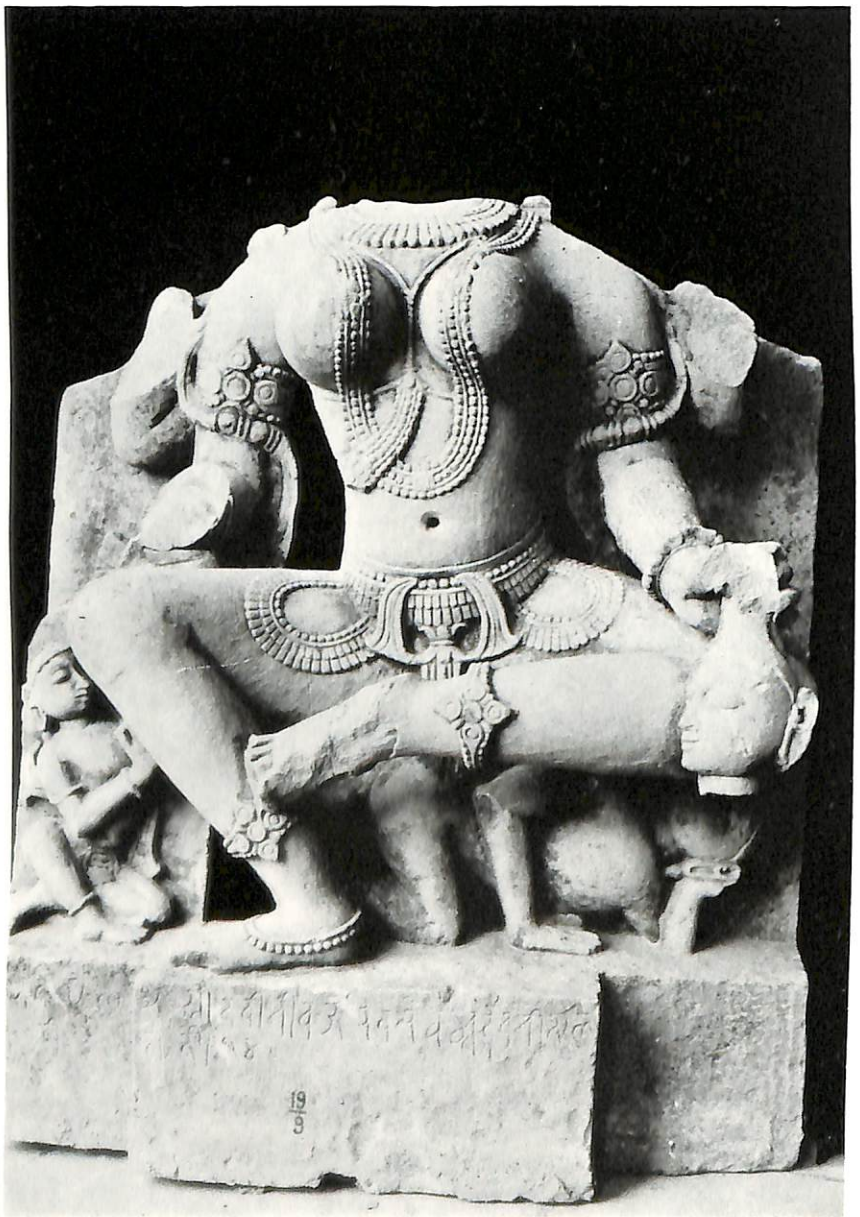
Apart from the temples in situ, the region of central India has yielded four major collections of Yoginī images from the sites of Naresar, Lokhari, Hinglajgadh and Shahdol. The number of images in these collections varies, the largest group consisting of around thirty seated Yoginīs from the region of Shahdol. Since the temples themselves are not in existence, we have no way of establishing whether these collections of goddesses belonged to shrines of the sixty-four Yoginīs or to one of the other potent numerical groupings of eighty-one or forty-two Yoginīs. With the exception of a museum booklet that describes some of the Shahdol Yoginīs,[1] none of the collections have been studied or published and we have hence thought it necessary to describe the Yoginīs in detail.

The Naresar Yoginīs

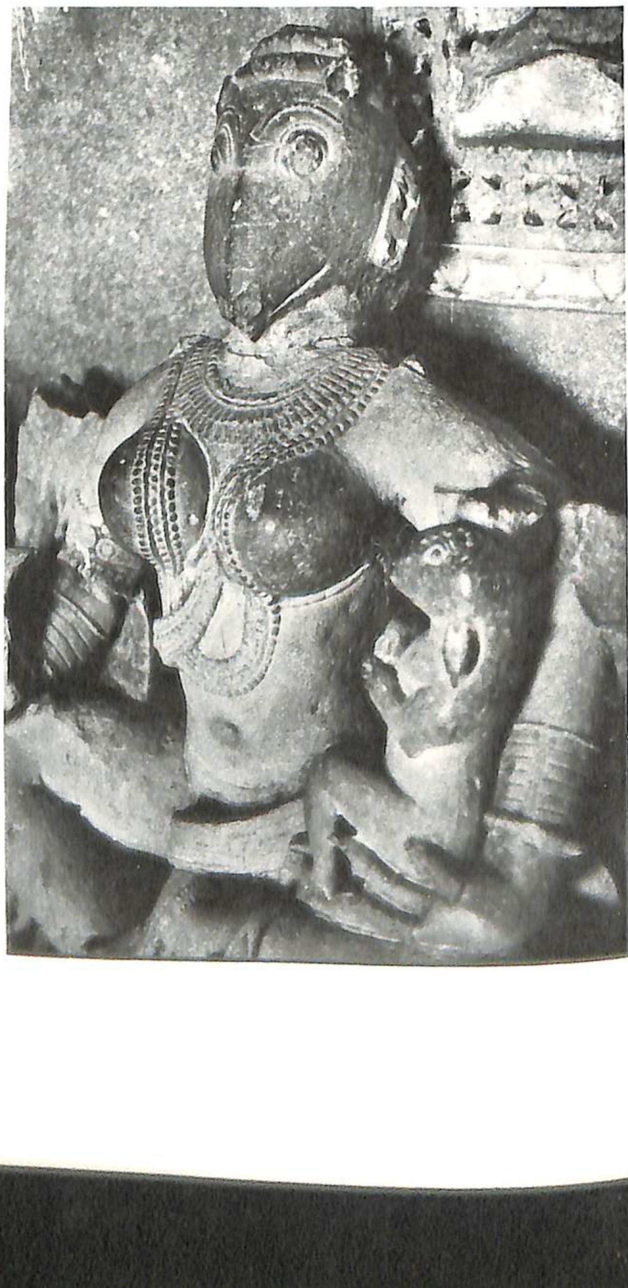
Twenty images of Yoginīs, housed mostly in the Gwalior Museum, were collected at the beginning of this century from the site of Naresar. Located roughly fifteen miles from Gwalior, in a lonely picturesque glen into which a cascading stream descends as a waterfall, Naresar appears at one time to have been a centre of building activity. Today a group of over twenty small Śaiva temples may be seen at the site and originally there appear to have been more shrines. Unfortunately no existing foundations of the Yoginī temple remain, but one possible site for its location is at the top of the hill overlooking a small artificial tank. We would normally expect the Yoginī temple to stand somewhat in isolation and also at the highest elevation.

The Naresar Yoginīs are badly damaged and appear, in fact, to have been deliberately disfigured. All the goddesses have high rounded breasts, smooth belly and firm thighs, and their fingernails are very precisely and painstakingly delineated. Inscriptions along the pedestals supply us with their names, and two clearly labelled Mātṛkās, Indrāṇī and Vaiṣṇavī, indicate that these Yoginīs belong to a tradition that regarded the Mātṛkās as part of the grouping of Yoginīs. The inclusion of Varuṇī (Varuṇānī) and Kauberī indicates that the *śaktis* of the *dikpālas* also formed members of the group, suggesting that the Naresar Yoginīs were regarded as acolytes of the Goddess. The Yoginī list given by the Jain saint Jinaprabhasuri, includes both Mātṛkās and *dikpālikās* (See Appendix I), but none of the remaining Naresar names finds a place among his Yoginīs, and the group clearly represents a local tradition. A unique feature of the Naresar Yoginīs is that they are numbered, thus providing us

Yoginī Devī-Nivau from Naresar (Courtesy: Gwalior Museum)

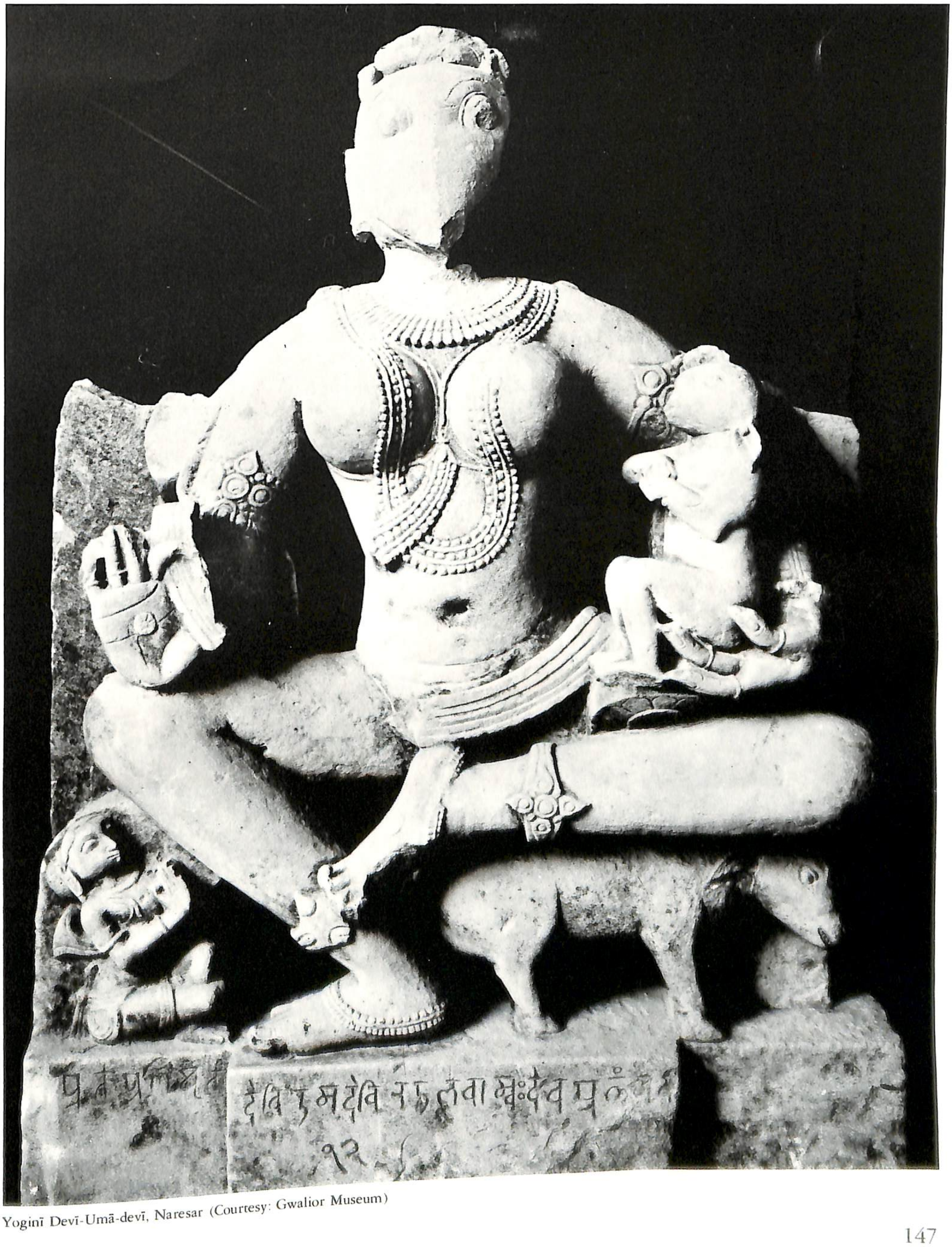


Detail of Umā-devī, from Naresar



with their exact location in the circle. All the images recovered appear to belong to the first third of the circle, and we shall consider them in the order of their numbering, glancing last at those in which either the number or the entire inscription is lost.

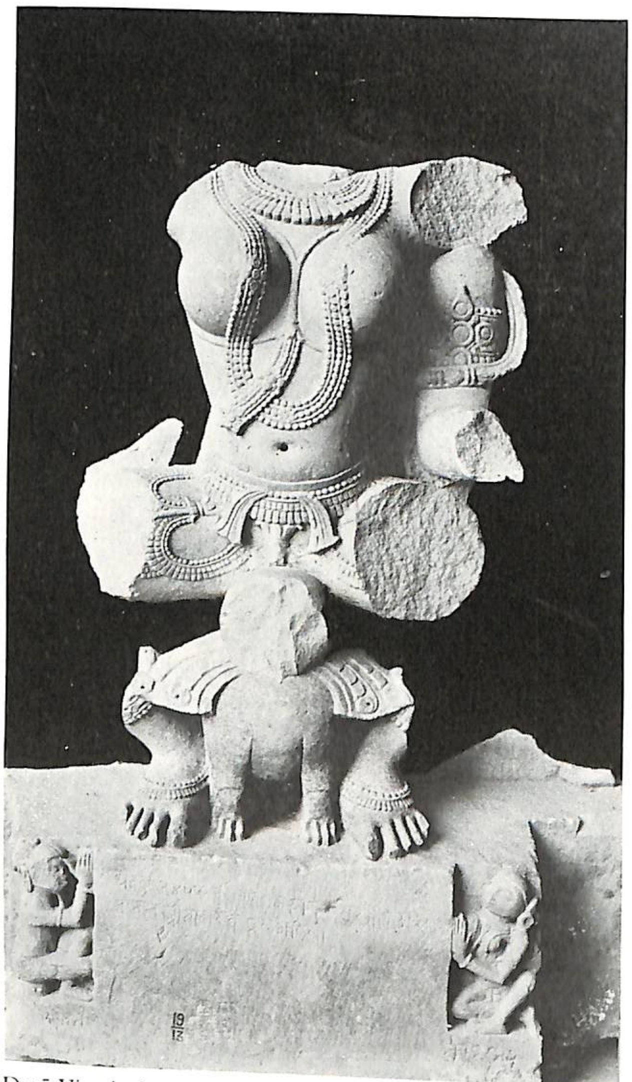
Yoginī No. 9 sits in *lalitāsana* on a bull, holding a *bilva* fruit in one hand; the inscription on her pedestal identifies her as Śrī Devī Carā (She who wanders in the sky). Indrāṇī with her elephant mount and a clear inscription is labelled No. 11. Yoginī No. 12, named Umādevī, is a parrot-faced goddess with a boar-faced child seated on her knee, and her animal *vāhana* appears to be a boar. Yoginī No 13 has a lizard-like creature as her mount, and her inscription reads *Vikanaṭañjaḥ*. If we interpose the letters of the label we get Vikaṭ (fearsome) añjanaḥ (lizard or collyrium), giving us either "She with the fearsome lizard" or "She of the fearsome



Yoginī Devī-Umā-devī, Naresar (Courtesy: Gwalior Museum) eyes". Yoginī No. 14, seated upon a recumbent male, holds a severed human head in one hand. The inscription reads *Śrī Devī Nivau,* a name that is non-Sanskritic in origin and probably represents a local goddess. No. 15, seated upon an owl, holds a skull-cup in one hand and is labelled Śrī Varuṇī Devī. The iconography for Varuṇī is unusual since the god Varuṇa is normally associated with a *makara* mount. Yoginī 19 sits upon a partly kneeling male, and the somewhat damaged inscription reads Śrī Kauberī who is the *śakti* of *dikpāla* Kubera. Yoginī No. 21, seated upon a tusked boar, is labelled Devī Maghali. The Sanskrit word *magha* means pleasure and also wealth and riches. Maghali may then be the Yoginī of pleasure and wealth. Yoginī No. 22, sculpted slightly larger than the others, sits upon a lotus seat that rests on a partly reclining male. The inscription reads Śrī Devī Bhayavavatī, which is probably a scribe's error of Bhyavatī meaning "Fearsome One". Yoginī No. 23 sits upon a bull and the inscription below reads Devī Jampa, a name for which no Sanskrit root is traceable.

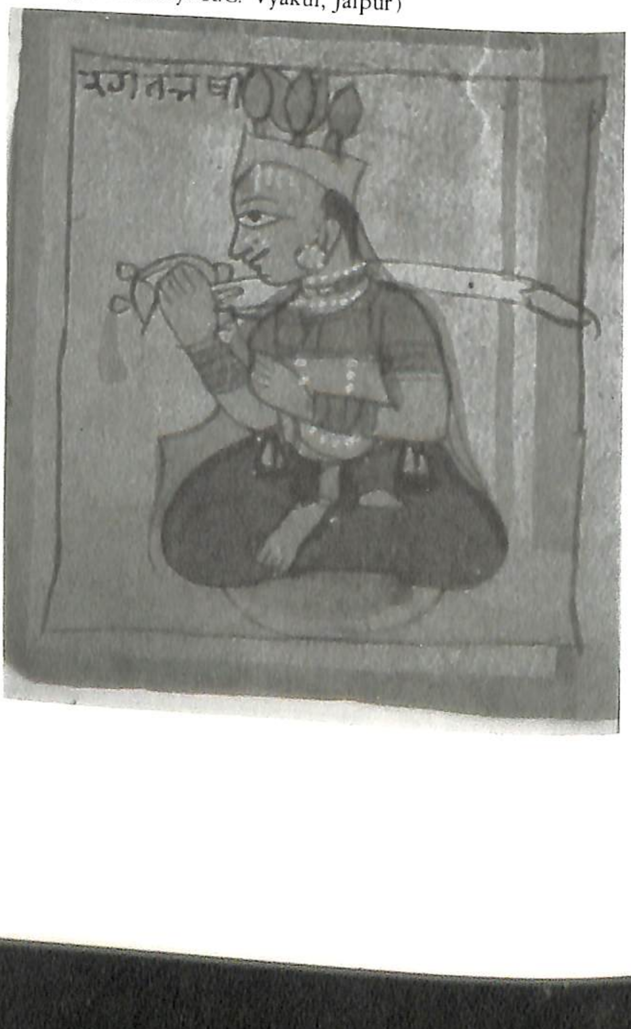
Among the images with defaced numbers is Śrī Devī Vaiṣṇavī, the letters *vaiṣṇa* and *vī* being separated by a large gap, almost as if the engraver was copying what had been written down for him, without being himself familiar with the words.[2] Possibly this accounts for the generally inferior engraving that is apparent in the Naresar labels. Vaiṣṇavī holds a conch in one hand and is accompanied by winged *garuḍa.* Another unnumbered Yoginī, in a badly damaged condition, has a bird as her mount. She is a slightly larger image and her name is given as Śrī Viarah, probably derived from *vihārā* and meaning "She who wandered (in the sky)". Her special importance lies in the inscription along her pedestal which contains the date of *saṁvat* 1245 or A.D. 1189, suggesting that the Naresar Yoginīs date to the closing decades of the 12th century. Other remnants of Naresar Yoginīs include a four-armed Yoginī holding a child, but the pedestal and inscription are damaged. A Yoginī with a peacock mount, intact only from knees down, has a label that reads *Raghatapahi* which is a corruption of Raktapāyī or "Drinker of Blood". She is reminiscent of a Rajasthan painting of a Yoginī with the same name and also of Rudhirapāyinī of a *Skanda Purāṇa* list (See Appendix II).

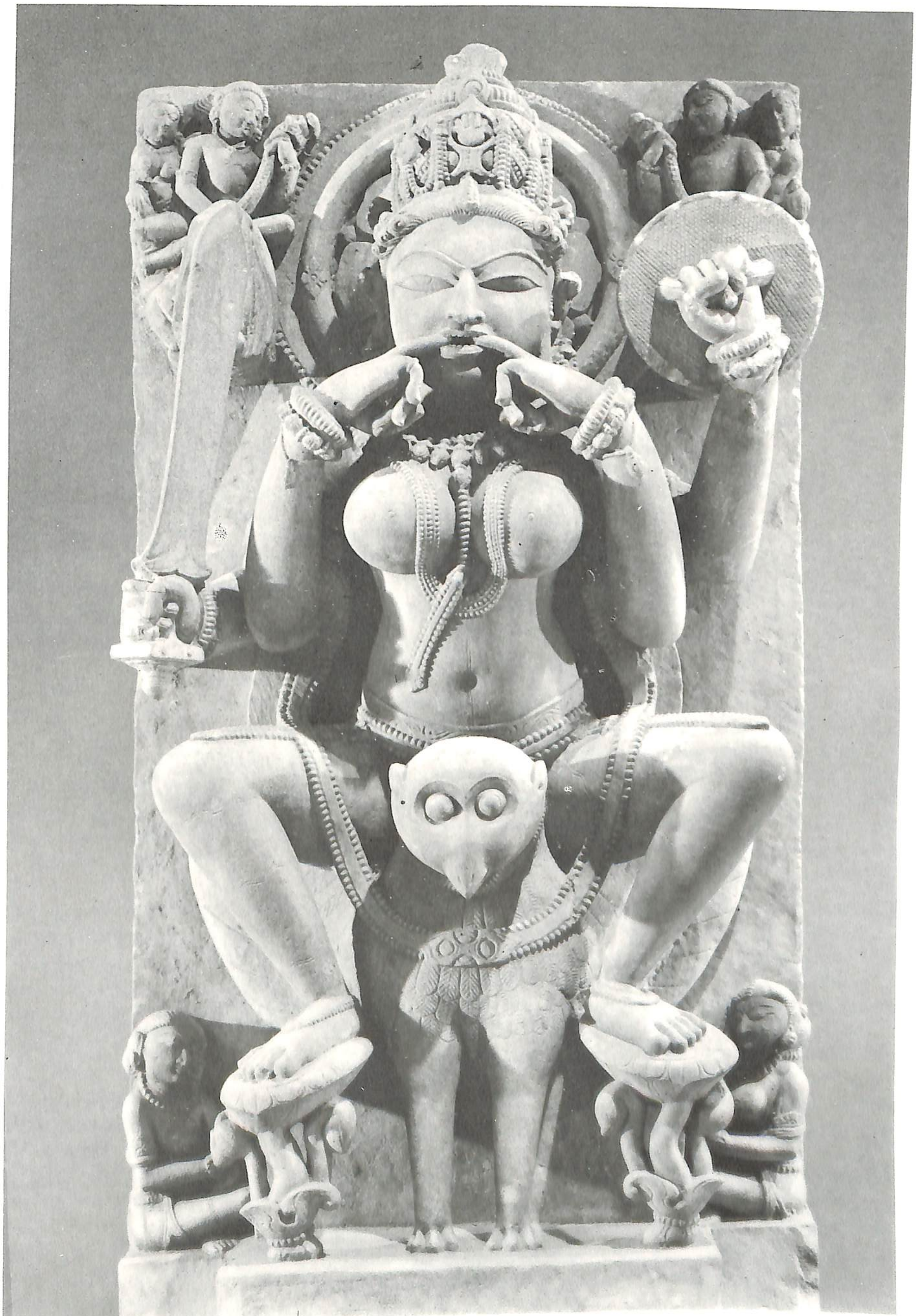
An uninscribed magnificently preserved Yoginī, now in a private collection in America,[3] belongs sculpturally to the same idiom as the Naresar Yoginīs. This piece was recovered originally from a private residence in Kanauj, almost 400 miles from Naresar, where she was in worship within a small brick structure.[4] On stylistic evidence, however, we would suggest that the piece came from the same workshops responsible for the Naresar images. Even so minor a detail as the very precise manner of delineating the fingernails is identical on the Naresar images and this Kanauj Yoginī. It would appear too that a similar buff sandstone is used for carving this Yoginī, while her size of 33 inches agrees with the Naresar images which vary from 32 to 36 inches, with one or two larger ones. Like the Naresar images, she has globular breasts, softly rounded belly and firm smooth thighs, with her feet placed firmly on two lotuses between which is seen her bird mount. The ornamentation, the manner of representing necklaces, girdles, armlets, bracelets and anklets is almost identical. With two hands



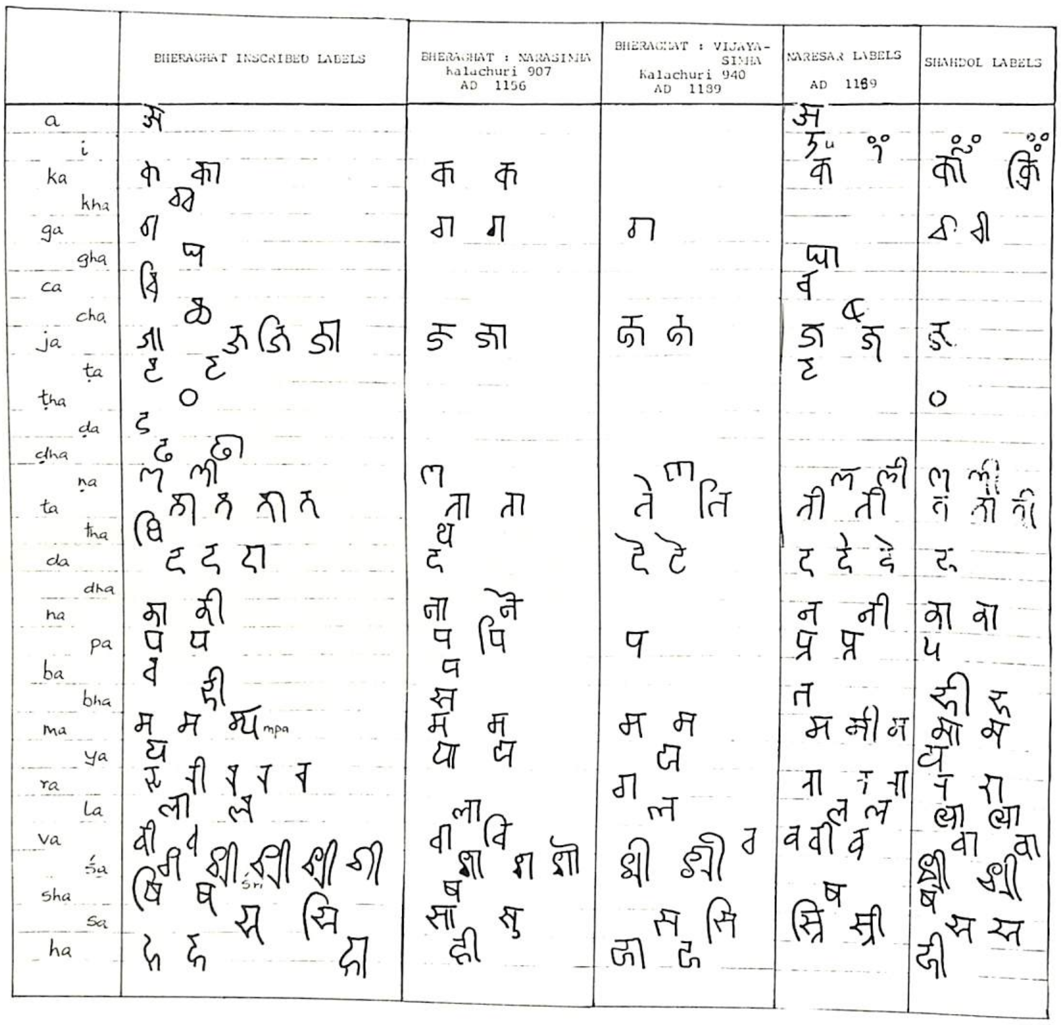
Devī Viarah, from Naresar (Courtesy: Gwalior Museum)

Yoginī Raghatabhakṣī, Rajasthan paper painting, 19th century (Courtesy: R.C. Vyakul, Jaipur)





Yoginī from Naresar workshop (Courtesy: R.H. Ellsworth, New York)


BHERAGHAT INSCRIBED LABELS
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BHERAGHAT : VIJAYASIMHA Kalachuri 940 AD 1189
NARESAR LABELS AD 1189
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Palaeographic chart

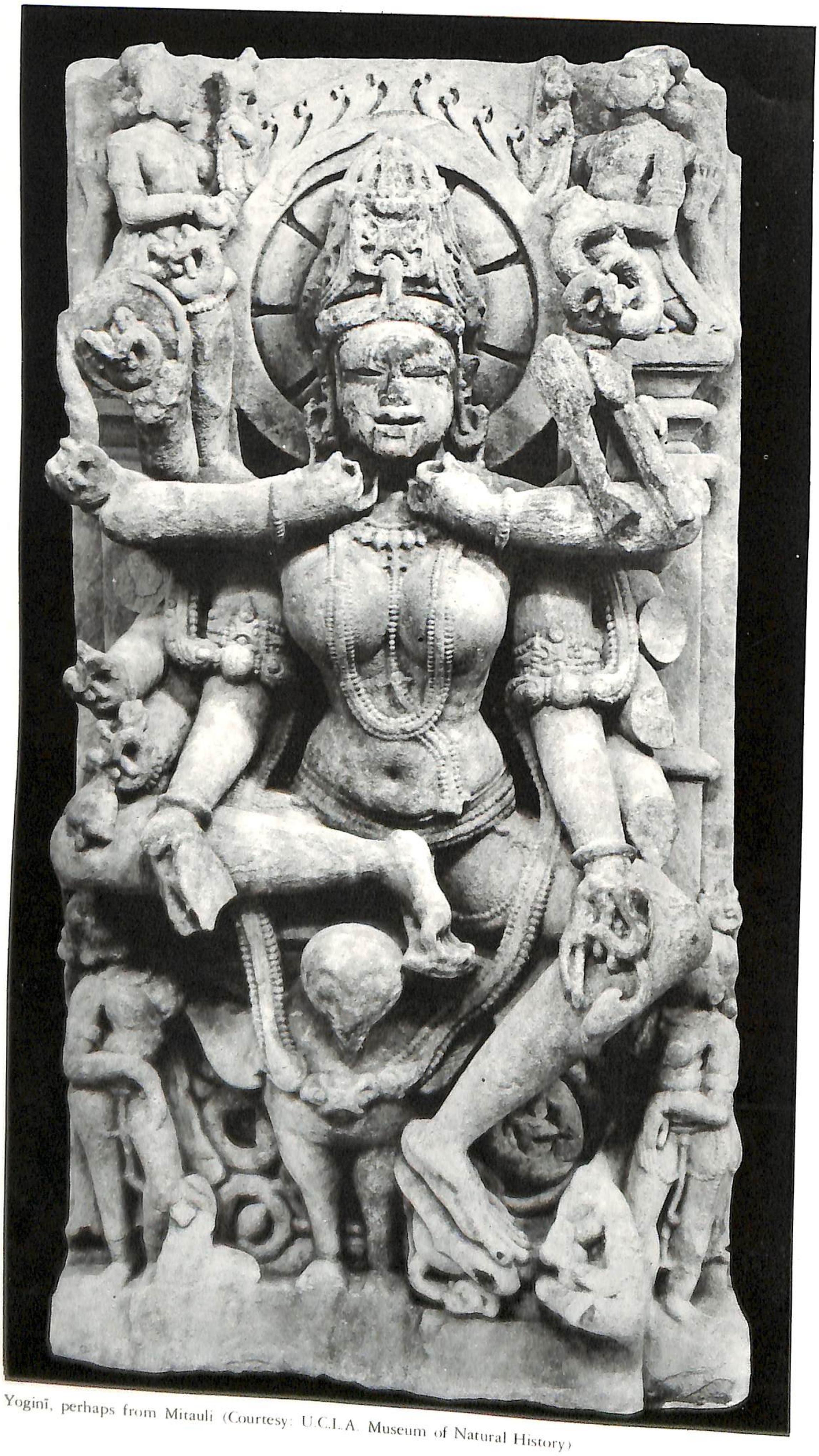
she holds a spear and sword, while the index fingers of her other two hands are placed at the corners of her partly open mouth. She could be identified with Yoginīs with names such as Rauravī (She who makes a loud sound), Hāhārāvā (She who utters loud sounds), Aṭṭāṭahāsā (She who laughs loudly) or Śivārāvā (She with the voice of a jackal). It may be recalled that an image with one pair of hands pulling open her mouth was also found in the Yoginī temple of Ranipur-Jharial in Orissa.

The Naresar Yoginīs present us with a serious chronological problem. It is difficult in the known context of the development of medieval Indian sculpture to accept a date for them that is later than A.D. 1000. The stylistic conception of the images is that of the 10th century and the exaggerated body torsions of a later period are absent. The Yoginīs are carved on a simplified slab with a plain backdrop; a seated attendant on either side along the base and a flying couple at the top complete the picture. In fact, the Naresar Yoginīs seem to be earlier than the Bheraghat figures which belong to the end of the 10th century, and could hardly be placed at the end of the 12th century. However, as already noted, the Yoginī Viara has a clearly inscribed date of *saṁvat* 1245 or A.D. 1189. Confirmation of this date for the inscriptions comes from the later forms of the letters *ta, na* and *sa.* Yet it is difficult to accept that we have misjudged the date of the sculptures themselves by two hundred years, and the only acceptable solution seems to be the suggestion that the inscriptions were added later, perhaps when the temple was being restored or freshly embellished.

The Naresar inscriptions, as we have pointed out, are poorly and very carelessly carved, and the language also is corrupt.[5] The orthography varies from one inscription to the next, making us wonder if the sculptor who so finely fashioned the Yoginīs would have permitted such poor scribesmanship. There is no mention of the actual donation of any image and each inscription repeats that a certain Vāmadeva bows down to *devī* Umā or *devī* Maghali or *devī* Varuṇī as the individual case may be. The name Vāmadeva and the phrase "bowing down to" are differently spelt in each of the records. It is possible to hypothesize that for some reason, such as the renovation of the temple some two hundred years after its construction, a certain Vāmadeva, apparently a devout worshipper of the Yoginīs, added his records, in the year A.D. 1189, to already existing images. Such instances are not unknown in India, and Cola temples in Tamilnadu abound in inscriptions added later during successive renovations. There are similar instances in Khajuraho and also in Bhubanesvar of inscriptions that are not coeval with the foundation of a temple. In this instance, therefore, it seems more sound to accept the stylistic rather than the palaeographic-epigraphic evidence for dating the Naresar Yoginīs.

Naresar, known originally as Naleṣvar, appears to have been the scene of activity over a period of four to five hundred years. The earliest temples at the site, of which a set of eight are still standing, belong to the 9th and 10th centuries. One of these temples contains an inscription which, although it does not contain a date, may be assigned palaeographically to the 10th century on the basis of the use of the earlier varieties of several letters, including *na* and *sa*.[6] In this early phase, Nalesvar consisted of a group of temples lower down the hill slope and it was probably at this time that the Yoginī temple was built in relative isolation, high up on the hill. During this period, the Kacchapaghātas ruled the Gwalior area as vassals of the Candellas. At the end of the 12th century, perhaps with the increasing importance of the Yoginī cult, a certain Vāmadeva whose lineage is unknown, was somehow associated with the temple and added the inscriptions to the Yoginī images. He may have belonged to the court of the Rajput Kacchavaha rulers who were dominant in Gwalior at this time, or he may have been an influential Śākta *guru*. Temples continued to be built higher up on the hill during this later phase and finally, in the mid-13th century, a certain Vāstupāladeva enclosed the entire temple complex and built a gateway on which he left his own clearly dated record of A.D. 1259.[7]

Although not belonging to the Naresar grouping, a sixteen-armed Yoginī seated on an owl, also in an American collection,[8] is of relevance here. Two of her hands hold strands of entrails which may be seen hanging out of her mouth, and among the objects recognisable in her other hands are a snake, a shield, a bell and a skull-cup. Names that could be suggested for her include Māṁsapriyā (Lover of flesh), Āntramālinī (Garlanded with entrails) and even Garbhabhakṣī (Eater of foetus). Impressive in her power while fearsome in her attributes, she belongs certainly to the more ferocious group of Yoginīs. In size (three feet) and in stylistic treatment of the female form, this Yoginī is akin to the



Yoginī, perhaps from Mitauli (Courtesy: U.C.L.A. Museum of Natural History)

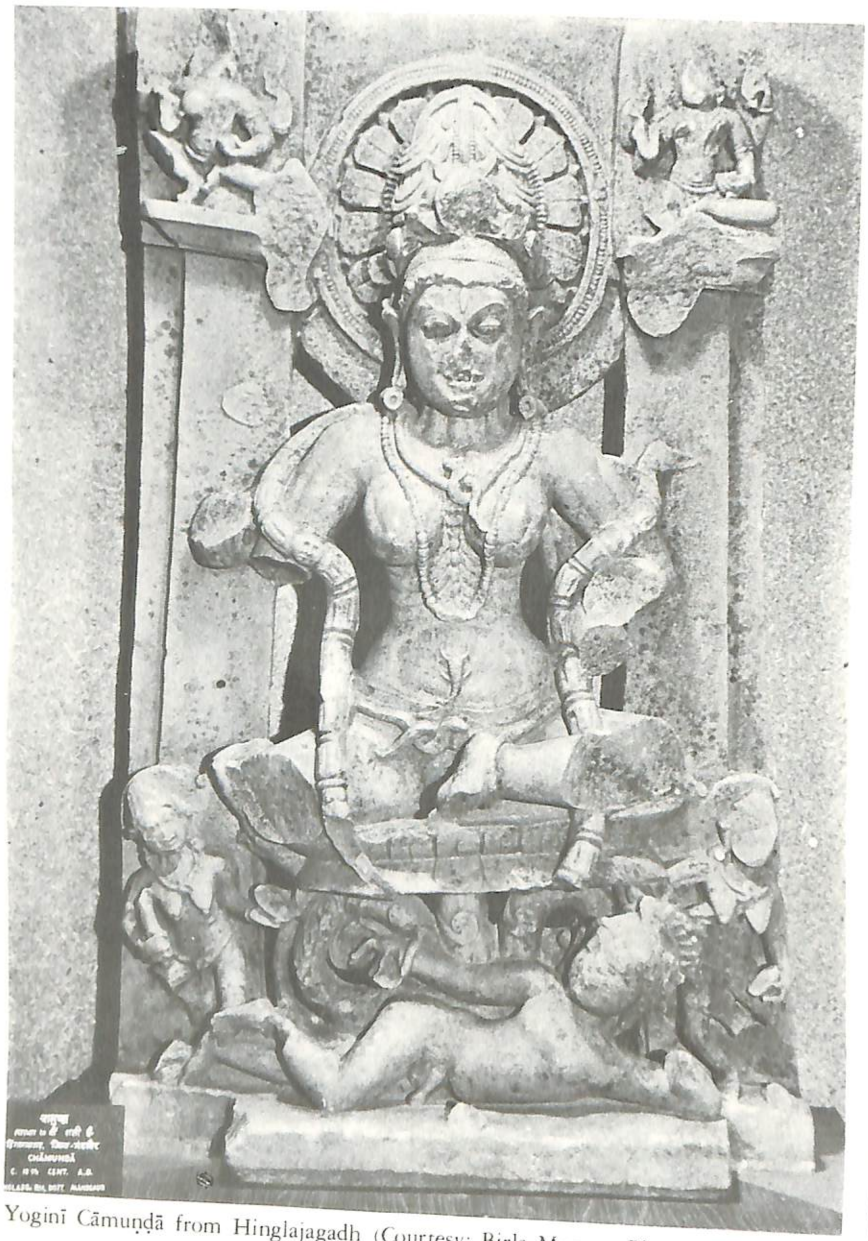
Naresar group, and obviously belonged to the same sculptural tradition. However, the more elaborate treatment of the slab with its clear throne supports and additional attendant figures, as well as the manner in which the torso of the Yoginī has been detached from the slab itself, may be seen as an indication of a date slightly in advance of Naresar. One wonders if it is probable that she belonged to the mid-11th century Mitauli temple, barely ten miles from Naresar, from which as we have seen, not a single Yoginī image has so far been traced.

Hinglajgadh Yoginīs

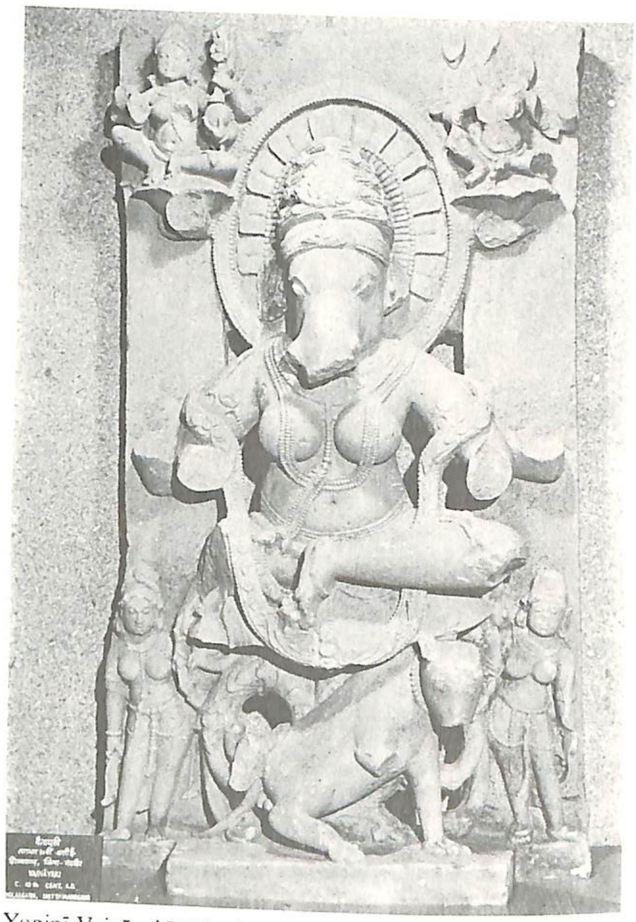
The site of Hinglajgadh on the border between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh has yielded a vast quantity of sculptural remains when it was being cleared to construct the Gandhisagar dam. Most of the sculptures are lying stacked one against the other in a shed at the site, while a few are preserved in the museums at Bhopal, and apparently also at Indore and Jhansi. So far, no systematic study of the images has been made. However, among the more than five hundred sculptures recovered, a number of fragmentary Yoginī images have been identified and we can say with some confidence that the site of Hinglajgadh once had a Yoginī temple. From the quantity of sculptures collected, it is apparent that the town was at one time a major temple centre traditionally Hinglaj (located in Baluchistan) is a place sacred for the worship of the Goddess as it is the spot that is said to enshrine the head of Satī. Hinglajgadh (the fort of Hinglaj) must have acquired its name because it also was an important site for the worship of the Goddess.

The Hinglajgadh Yoginīs are seated figures, partly cut away from the background of the plain slab, leaving two pilaster-like panels on either side. Flanking figures are few with just an attendant below and a flying image at the top beside the petalled halo behind the head of each Yoginī. The Yoginīs are well modelled figures, generally with torsoes left bare. On the basis of stylistic considerations, we would suggest that the Hinglajgadh Yoginīs are contemporary with those at Naresar and were probably carved soon after the middle of the 10th century.

Five of these Yoginīs are exhibited in the Birla Museum at Bhopal. A Yoginī with three faces and twenty arms sits in *lalitāsana* with one leg resting against a reclining male. All her arms are broken and only the rosary in one hand is distinguishable. With her central head displaying a skull in the headdress, she is definitely not Brāhmī and is more akin to Bheraghat's Yoginī Sarvatomukhī. Four-armed Indrāṇī, with a *kuca bandha* across her breasts and a crown on her head, sits on her mount, the elephant Airāvata. The Yoginī Cāmuṇḍā sits on a lotus seat below which is a reclining male. She has a third eye on her forehead, fangs in her mouth, a scorpion placed at the level of her navel, a snake knotted around as a necklace and a garland of skulls. While she is not skeletal, her ribs are visible and she has prominent tendons. Female attendants on either side of her have pendulous breasts and hold a severed human head and a skull-cup. An elephant-headed Yoginī with a large mouse for her mount appears to be Vaināyakī: unfortunately all four of her arms are broken. The fifth Yoginī, a standing image in what is otherwise

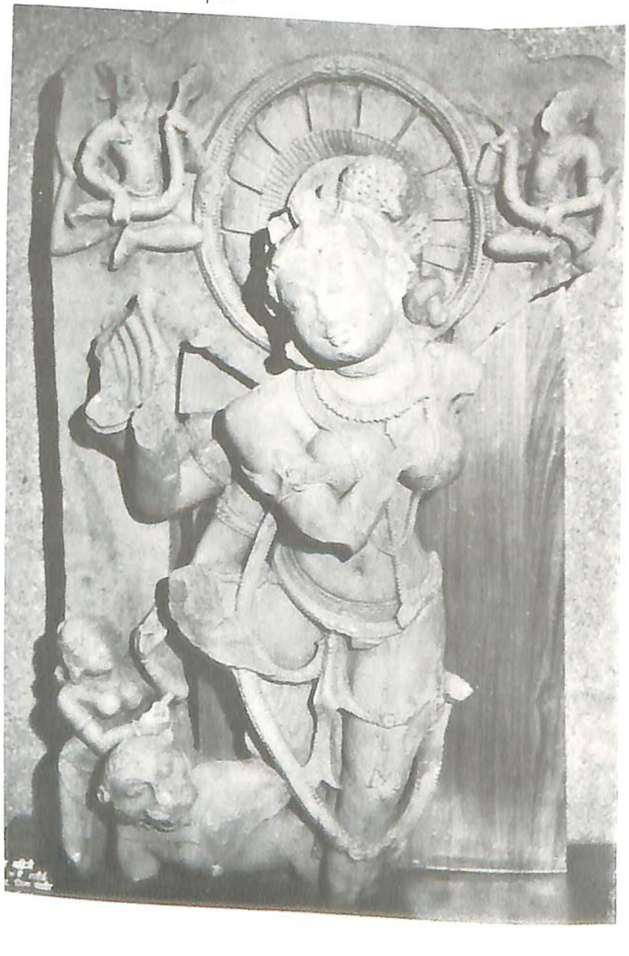


Yoginī Cāmuṇḍā from Hinglajagadh (Courtesy: Birla Museum Bhopal)



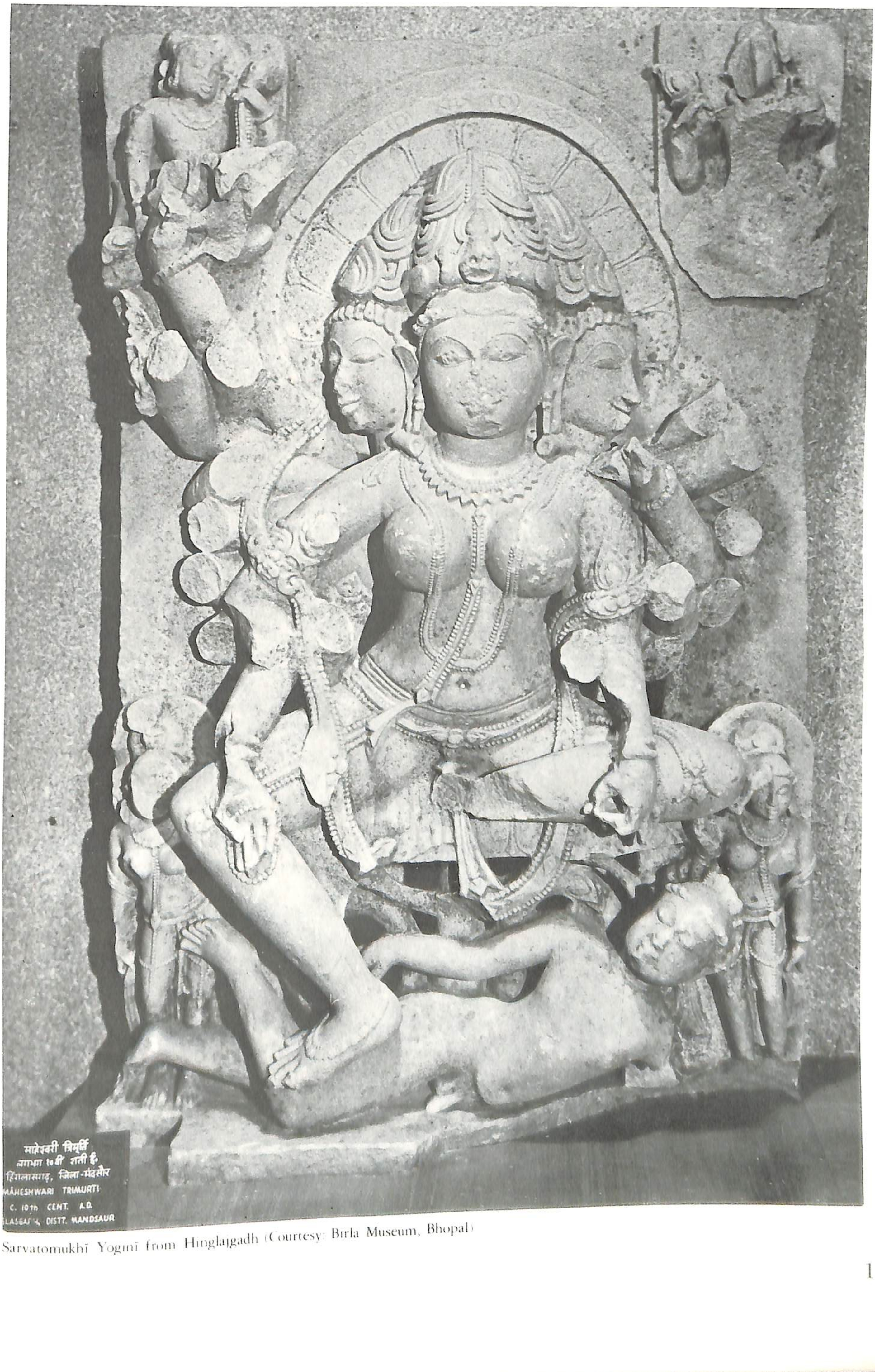
Yoginī Vaināyakī, Hinglajgadh (Courtesy: Birla Museum Bhopal)

Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī from Hinglajgadh (Courtesy: Birla Museum, Bhopal)



a seated group, is clearly another local version of Mahiṣamardinī. Although the lower portion of the slab is missing, we can see that she has one leg placed firmly down and the other bent and placed presumably on the back of the missing buffalo. Her rearing lion mount is seen to the left of the slab in a position that suggests his aggresive part in the battle.

The State Museum at Bhopal houses several other fragments of Hinglajgadh Yoginīs, many of which are too badly damaged to describe individually. Somewhat better preserved examples include a Yoginī with a snake hood behind her head, a goddess with an elongated double-headed *makara* mount, and Vaiṣṇavī with her *garuḍa vāhana*. It is only when the entire Hinglajgadh collection is catalogued that a complete study of these Yoginīs will be possible. However, the surviving pieces are sufficient to indicate that the Hinglajgadh Yoginī temple belonged to a tradition that included the Mātṛkās in the Yoginī fold, and regarded the Yoginīs as acolytes of the Great Goddess.


माहेश्वरी त्रिमूर्ति
लगभग १०वीं शती ई.
हिंगलाजगढ़, जिला-मंदसौर
MÃHESHWARI TRIMURTI
C. 10th CENT. A.D.
LASGAR, DISTT. MANDSAUR

Sarvatomukhī Yoginī from Hinglajgadh (Courtesy: Birla Museum, Bhopal)

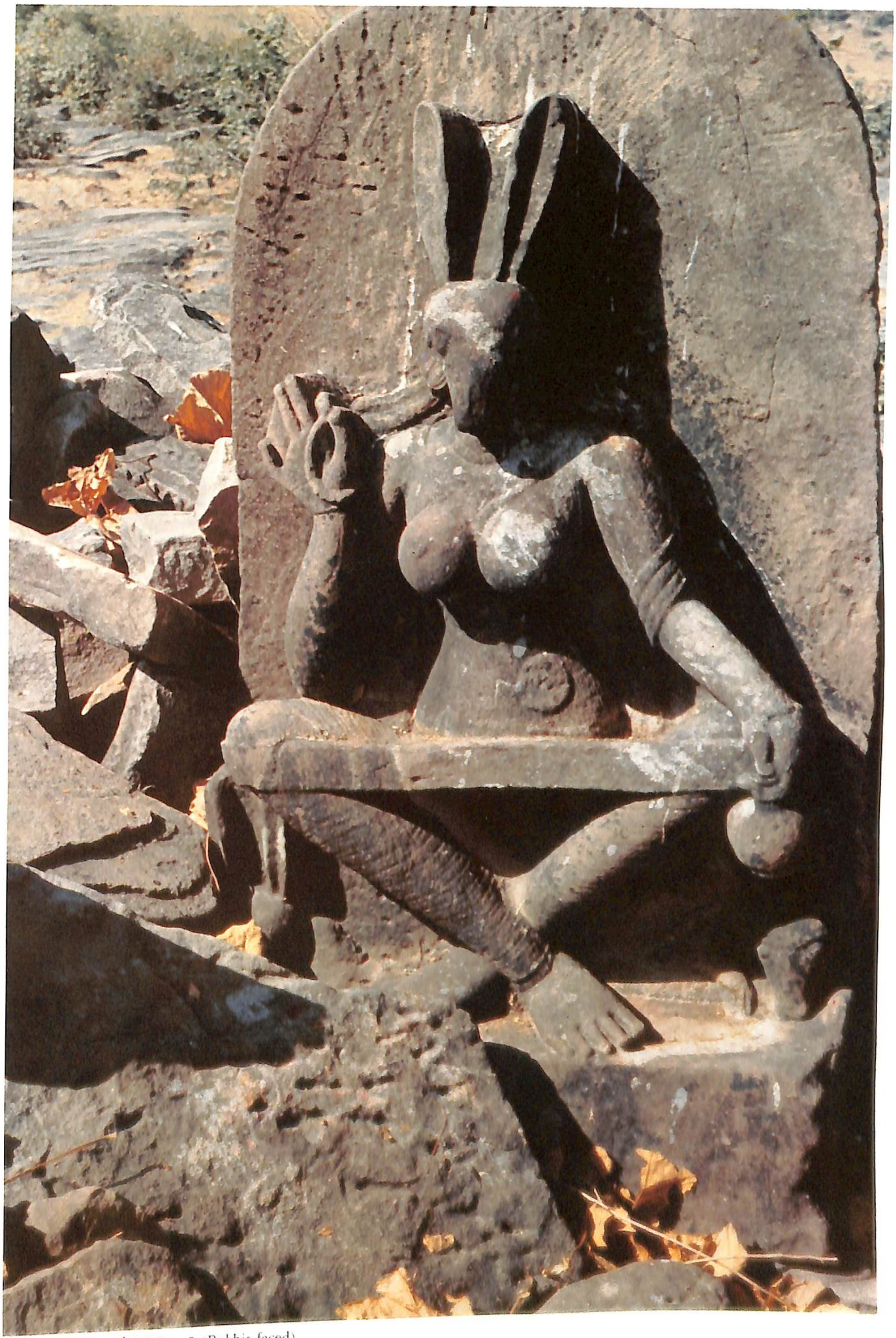
Lokhari Yoginīs

On top of an isolated hill in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, near the village of Lokhari, are twenty images of Yoginīs together with a large quantity of stone blocks that once formed the walls of a Yoginī temple.[9] Villagers report that in recent years, a number of images were carted away in trucks by vandals. Each Yoginī measures roughly five feet in height and is carved on a slab of coarse-grained sandstone with a rounded top. Only the figure of the Yoginī and her *vāhana* are sculpted against the plain slab of stone which does not contain the additional details of her throne, attendant figures at the base or flying figures above. This feature and the significant absence of haloes, indicates a similarity to the Yoginīs at Hirapur, Ranipur-Jharial and Rikhiyan, and we would hence suggest that Lokhari belongs to the first half of the 10th century.

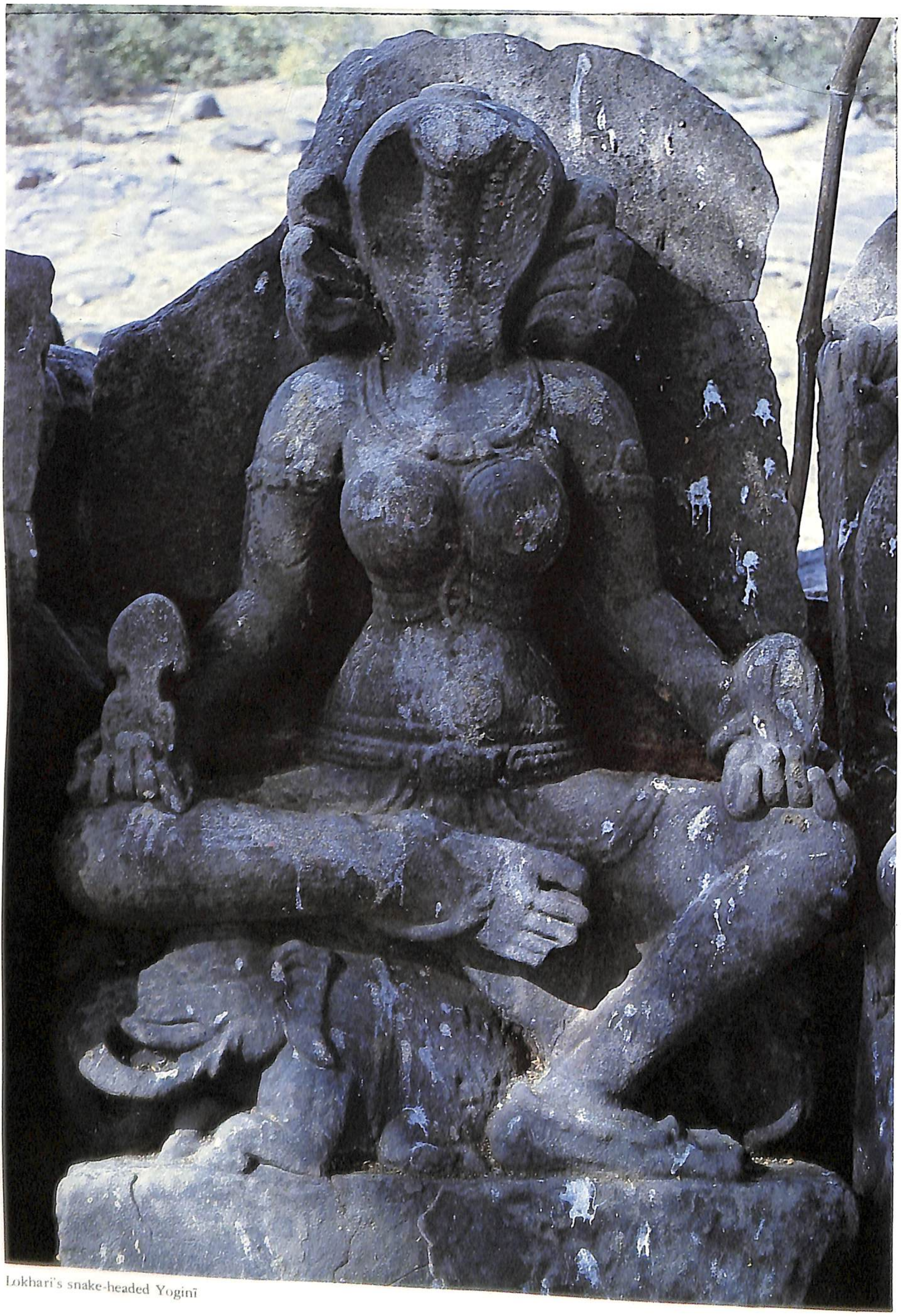
The Lokhari images do not possess the artistic beauty and finesse displayed by the figures at Hirapur or Bheraghat. The modelling of the Yoginīs is minimal and some of the features, such as the feet, are rendered almost in clumsy manner. The Yoginīs have large rounded breasts and rounded stomachs and they sit usually in *lalitāsana* with one leg folded against a seat or mount and the other resting on the ground.

Despite the lack of artistic elegance, the Lokhari Yoginīs have a special fascination which lies in the fact that most of them have animal heads, with the human face being a rare occurrence. There are no inscriptions at Lokhari and the names used in the following pages to describe the Yoginīs are taken generally from one or other textual list of these goddesses. A unique image not found in other Yoginī groupings is Śaśakānanā (Rabbit-faced One), shown with small rabbits peeping out, one from each end of her seat. Holding a strand of her hair in one hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* (water vessel) in the other, Śaśakānanā sits with a *yogapaṭṭa* or meditation band around her knees, which is an unusual feature. Sarpāsyā (Snake-faced One) is another unique and arresting image. In other Yoginī temples, the snake-headed Yoginī has a large snake hood placed behind a human head. At Lokhari, however, the snake hood takes the place of her face and makes her a strikingly bizarre deity. Yet she is a graceful figure, sitting with one leg on her elephant *vāhana*, and with a snake at the other end of her slab.

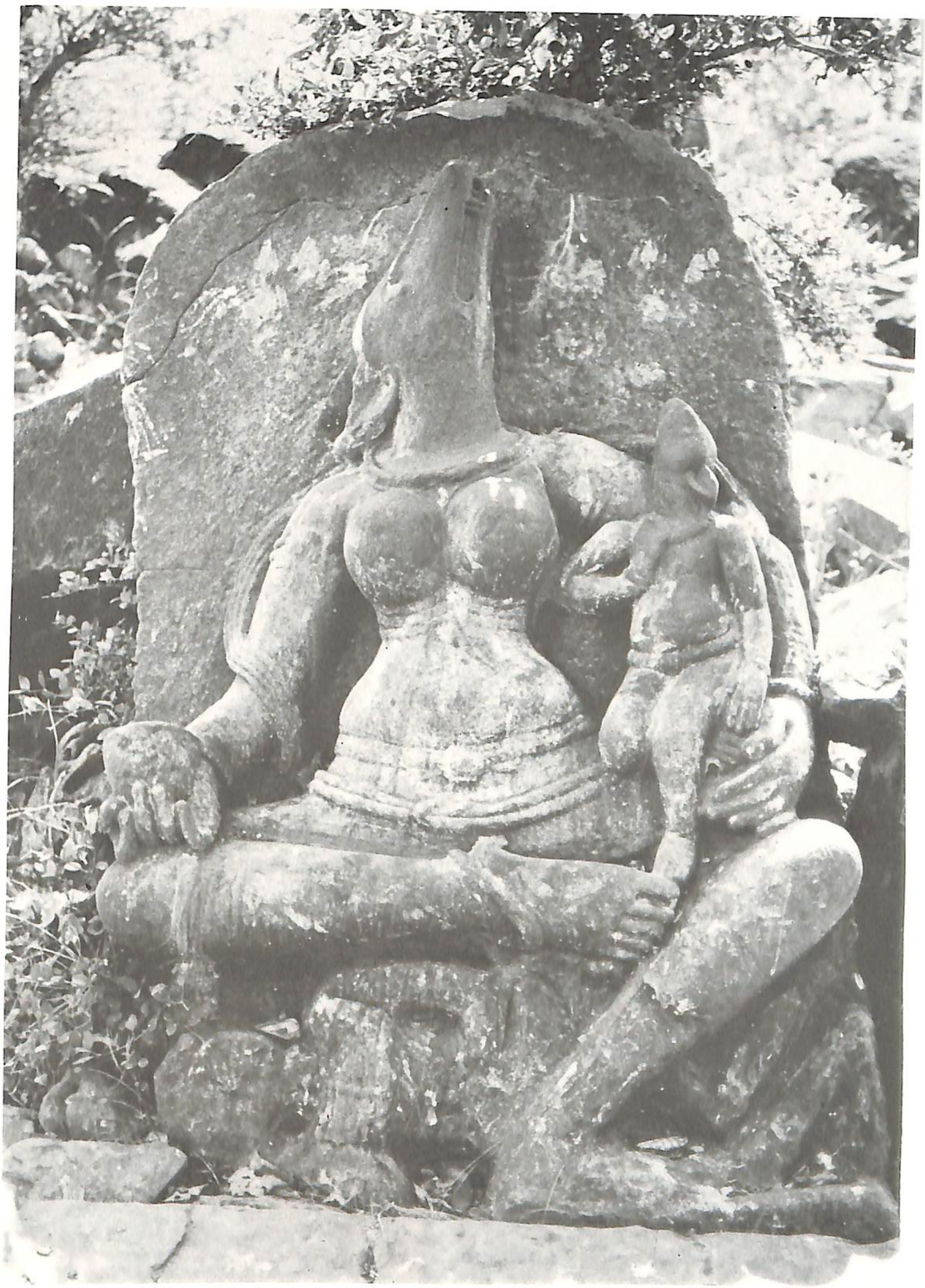
Hayānanā (Horse-faced One), resting upon a creature that looks like a hyaena, is an imposing figure with large melon-like breasts. In one hand she holds a fish and in the other a long thin object which she appears to be eating. Hayagrīvā (Horse-necked One) gazes upwards, supporting a similarly horse-necked child on one knee. She sits on a human corpse and holds a skull-cup in one hand. Ajānanā (Goat-faced One) has her feet resting upon an elongated goat, and holds a rosary and *kamaṇḍalu*. Gomukhī (Cow-faced One) with a cow as *vāhana*, has four arms and holds a discus and club in two hands and rounded objects, perhaps *bilva* fruits, in the other two. Ṛkṣānanā (Bear-faced One) is a four-armed Yoginī with a bear as mount. Gajānanā (Elephant-headed One) with a thunderbolt in one hand and a *bilva* fruit in the other, has an elephant as her mount. Mṛgaśirā (Deer-headed One) is a short, round-bellied



Lokharī's Yoginī Śaśakānanā (Rabbit-faced)

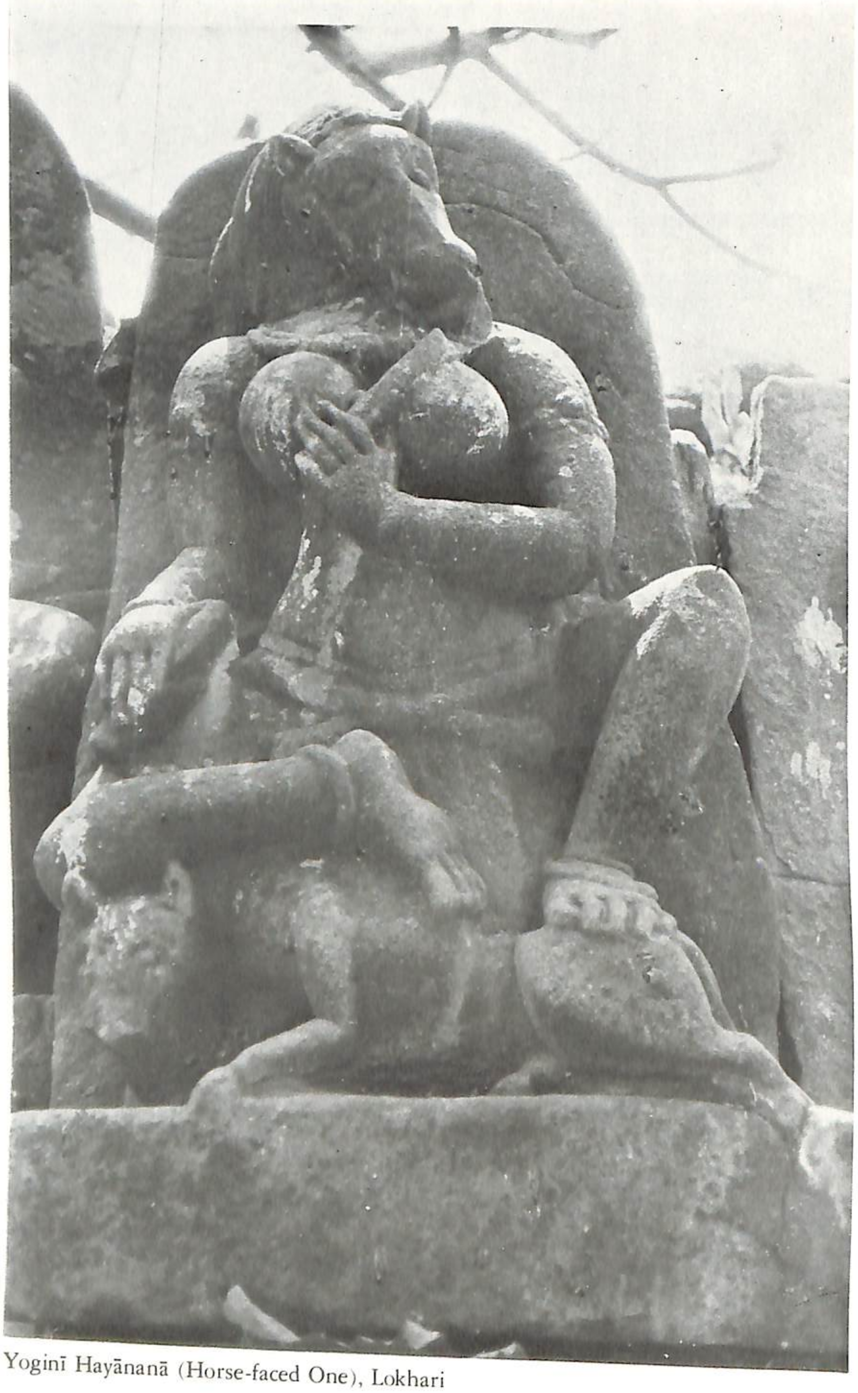


Lokhari's snake-headed Yoginī



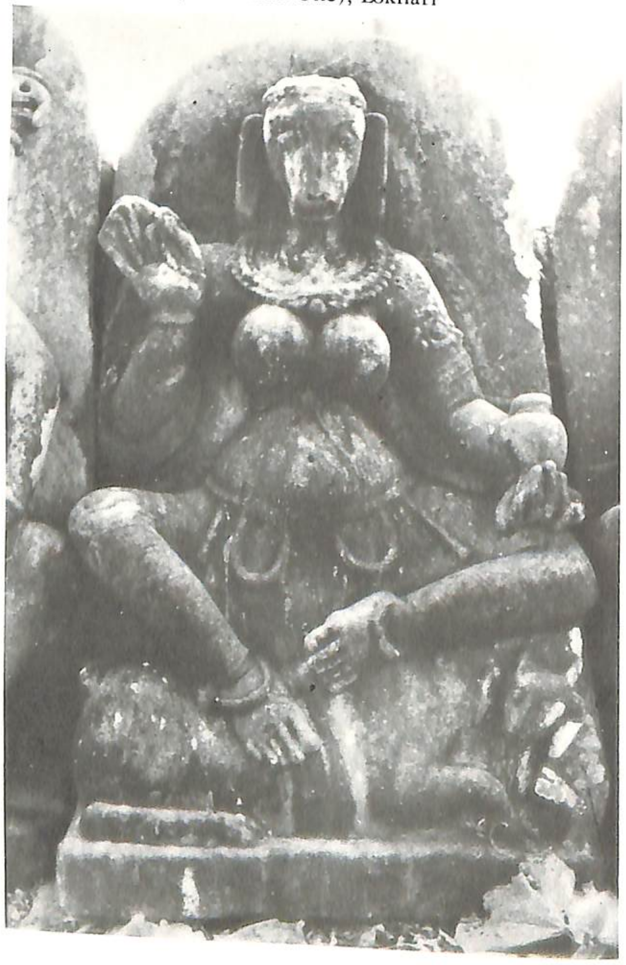
Lokhari's Hayagrīvā (Horse-necked One)

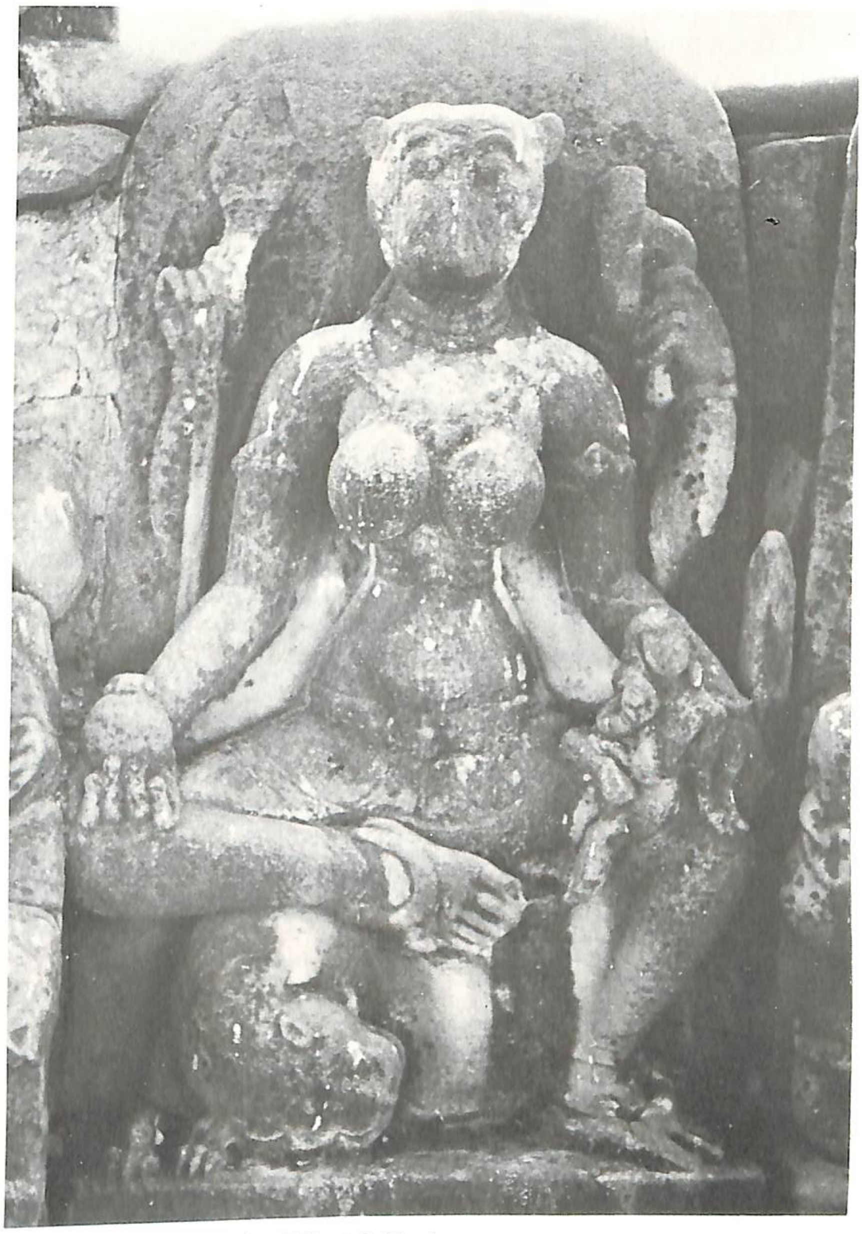
Yoginī holding a fish in one hand and a lotus in the other, and shown with an antelope *vāhana*. A Yoginī with serrated horns perhaps represents a *sambhar* deer. She is large bellied and holds a spear and a small rounded object. A buffalo-headed Yoginī (Vṛṣānanā) holds a club in one hand and a round *bilva* fruit in the other, which is being pecked at by the swan depicted as her mount. Another similarly buffalo-headed goddess holds a skull-cup in one hand and a club topped with a skull in the other, this time with a buffalo as her mount. Siṁhamukhī (Lion-faced One) supports a



Yoginī Hayānanā (Horse-faced One), Lokhari

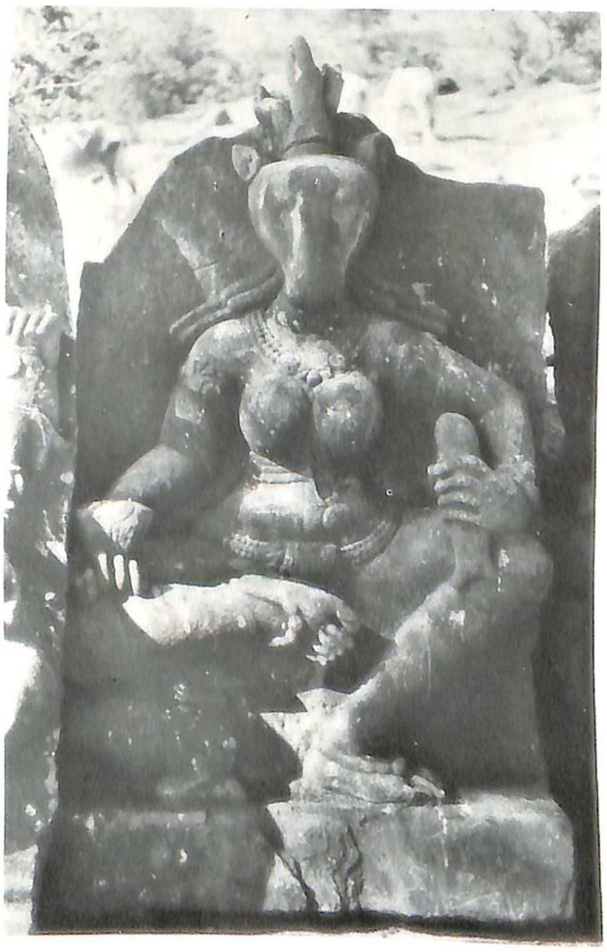
Yoginī Ajānanā (Goat-faced One), Lokhari





Yoginī Ṛkṣānanā (Bear-faced One), Lokhari

Yoginī Mṛgaśirā (Deer-headed), Lokhari



human child on her knee and has a lion as *vāhana,* and Vānarānanā (Monkey-faced One) is also present.

Only three Yoginīs have human faces and all three are Mātṛkās. Aindrī wears a tall crown and holds a thunder-bolt in one hand, with her elephant mount beside her. Vaiṣṇavī also wearing a crown, is four-armed and has *garuḍa* as her *vāhana.* Four-armed Cāmuṇḍā sits resting both feet upon a prostrate male, and wears a headdress of skulls and a garland threaded with skulls. She has prominent tendons, elongated sagging breasts, a third eye in her forehead, wide open mouth and bulging eyeballs. In three of her hands she holds a trident, a curved knife and a skull-cup, while the fourth grasps a piece of flesh which she is eating. The Lokhari temple is another example of a tradition that includes the Mātṛkās among the Yoginīs. The role of these Yoginīs, however, seems to be more that of minor deities attendant upon Devī than of highly placed acolytes.

On the hillside adjoining the mound of stones that once comprised the Yoginī temple are fragments of carving, perhaps of the 10th century, that may have belonged to another shrine standing in the vicinity; it appears that the Yoginī temple is possibly of the same date. The simplified treatment of the Yoginī images carved without haloes is, as we already mentioned, reminiscent more of the early 10th century Ranipur-Jharial sculptures than of the sophisticated and more elaborate carving of the somewhat later Bheraghat Yoginīs. A short distance away, among the ruins of an extensive fortification, is a stone elephant bearing an inscription with a date of *saṁvat* 1516 or A.D. 1459. While this date has no direct connection with the Yoginī temple, it merely serves to indicate that Lokhari continued to be the centre of activity as late as the 15th century.

Yoginī Cāmuṇḍā, Lokhari

Yoginī Vṛṣānanā (Buffalo-headed), Lokhari

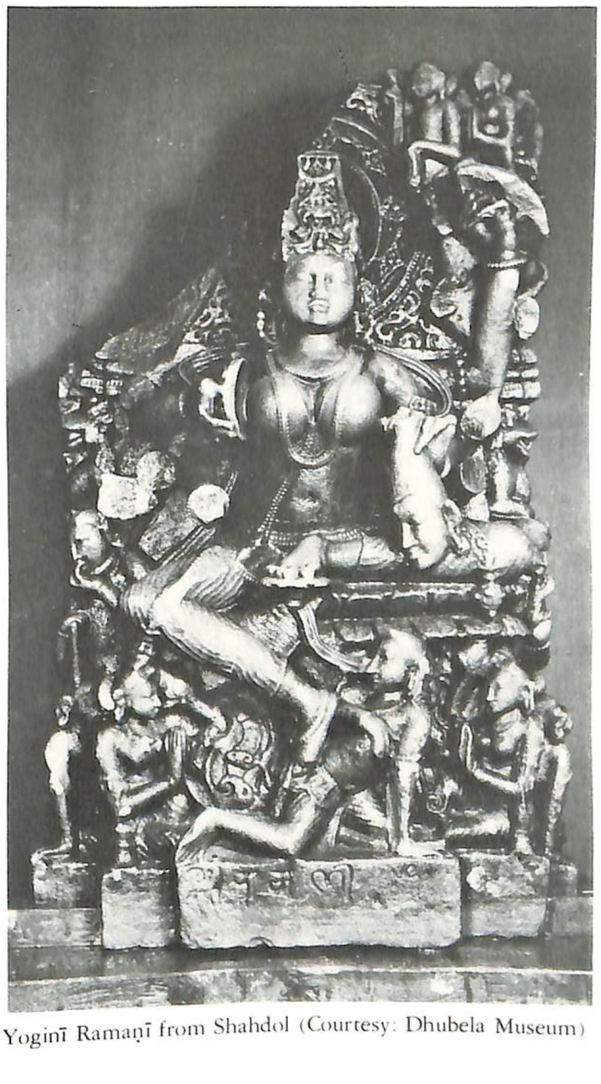
Yoginī Gomukhī (Cow-faced One), Lokhari

The Shahdol Yoginīs

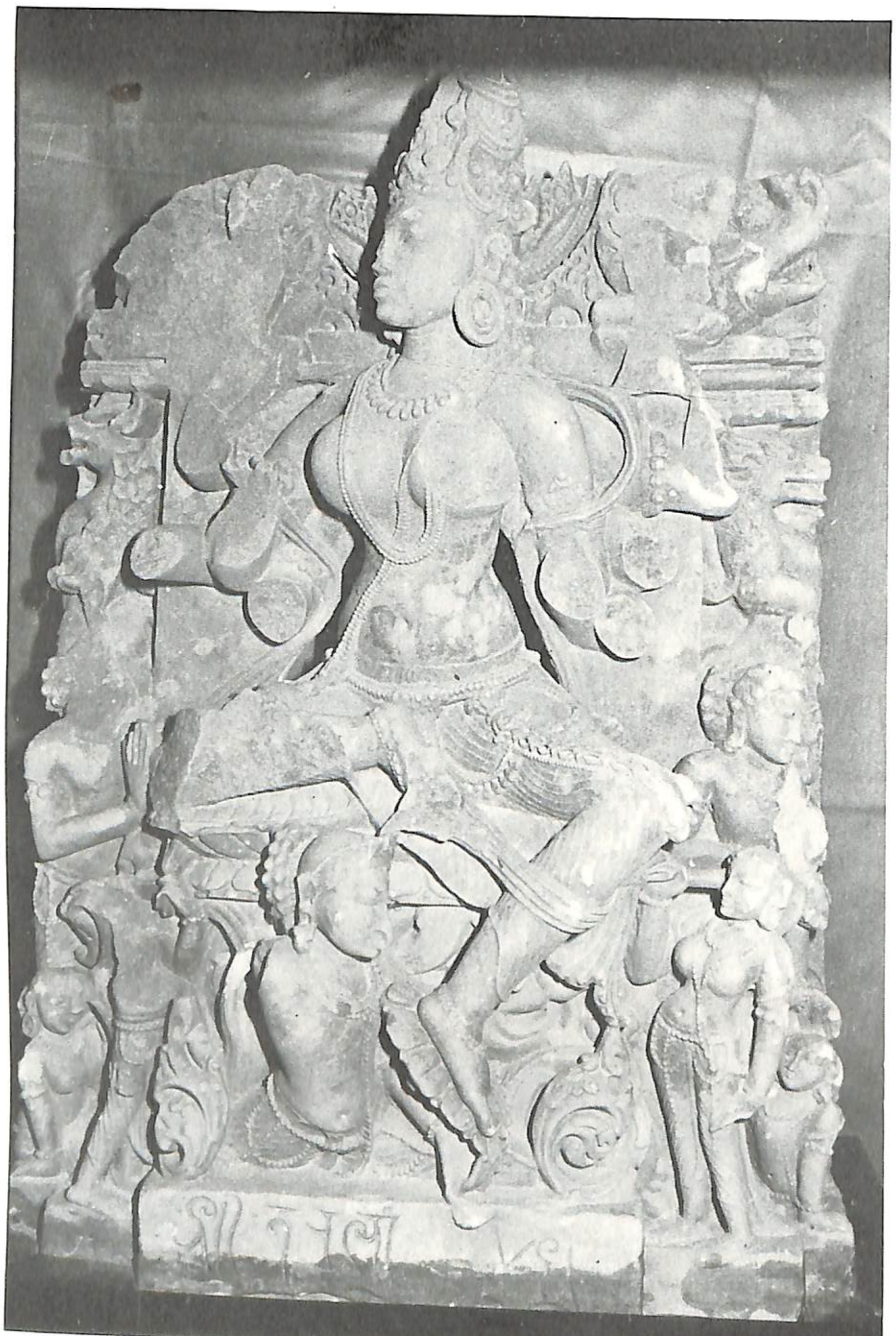
The Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, known in ancient inscriptions as Sahasa-dollaka, has yielded a large collection of Yoginī images that may be divided into two groups, one being a series of seated Yoginīs and the other a set of standing images. Since the two types are not combined in the same temple with the exception of the standing Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī in a temple as seated goddess, we may assume that the images come from two independent Yoginī temples. Further support for this idea of two temples comes from the fact that we have, in fact, two Mahiṣamardinī Yoginīs, one seated and one standing. Both groups having inscribed labels belong stylistically and palaeographically together, suggesting that the two temples were of contemporaneous construction. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify the exact location of either temple.

These Shahdol Yoginīs are today dispersed in three different locations. The Dhubela Museum not far from Khajuraho contains about twenty of these Shahdol Yoginīs, all in good state of preservation, but with no records of their findspot. The Indian Museum at Calcutta contains a set of five seated Shahdol Yoginīs. Labelled as belonging to Satna because they were recovered from a private residence in that town (also in the Shahdol district), they belong clearly to the Shahdol grouping of Yoginīs. And finally, a collection of badly damaged Yoginīs are to be found in the compounds of the village temples in the two Shahdol villages of Antara and Panchgaon. It appears likely that the actual findspot of the images and hence the Yoginī temples themselves, lay in the vicinity of these villages.

Several factors indicate that the images housed in these three different locations belong together. The Yoginīs are all carved of what appears to be the same variety of sandstone and all are roughly three feet in height. All have inscribed labels which are palaeogaphically akin, and further strengthening the suggestion of their common authorship is a signature mark resembling the Nāgarī numeral four (though not in itself a numeral) that is seen on these images, whether at Dhubela, Calcutta or in the Shahdol villages. All are closely akin in stylistic conception. Each seated Yoginī sits in *lalitāsana* on a lotus seat, with her *vāhana* and a whole group of attendants and devotees carved below her. Standing Yoginīs generally have both feet planted firmly on the ground except for the elegantly poised dancing Badarī. Most of the Yoginīs have eight or more arms; unfortunately the objects once held in them are damaged and generally not recognisable. Elaborate haloes are placed behind their heads, with lotus petals at the centre enclosed by a ring of alternating circular and triangular motifs. This identical treatment of haloes is seen on the Yoginīs of all three collections, further confirming their common origin. Groups of flying figures flank the halo, while the central background is occupied by a rearing leonine motif that acts as a bracket support for their thrones. The base of each slab is stepped backwards, with the inscribed label on the broad front portion of the base.



Yoginī Ramaṇī from Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



Yoginī Taralā (Glittering One), Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

Shahdol's Seated Yoginīs

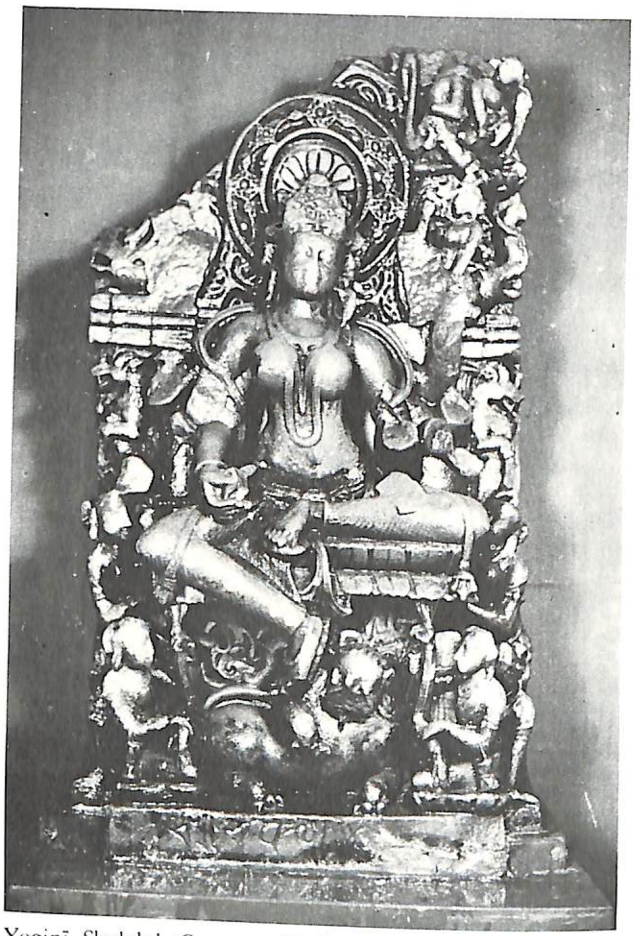
The seated Yoginīs of Shahdol belong to a tradition that includes the Mātṛkās and the Dikpālikās in its grouping of Yoginīs. Clearly inscribed images exist of the Mātṛkās Vārāhī and Indrāṇī and of the *dikpālikās* Yamā, Varuṇī and Vajrā (for Indrāṇī). Indrāṇī is thus included twice, once as a Mātṛkā and again as a Dikpālikā. As mentioned in the context of the Naresar images, the only textual listing of Yoginīs to include both Mātṛkās and Dikpālikās is that of Śrī Jinaprabhasuri (Appendix I); but here, as at Naresar, none of the other Shahdol Yoginīs finds a place in his list. Nor do these Shahdol Yoginīs conform to any other textual series. Shahdol's Taralā has a *garuḍa vāhana,* while Hemadri and others assign Taralā an iguana or a *makara* mount (Appendix II). Tāraṇī of Shahdol is perhaps the counterpart of Tārā of the Hemadri group; but these texts assign Tārā an owl or a parrot as mount, while Shahdol's Tāraṇī has a reclining male as *vāhana.* The only other

Shahdol Yoginī to figure in any textual listing is Kapālinī who finds a place in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* list of sixty-four and in certain other manuscript listings. Other Shahdol Yoginīs do not reflect a Sanskrit tradition and are apparently local village deities collected into auspicious numerical groups and placed in a cricular arrangement, in which they acquired their significance as deities of great power.

Among the more striking Yoginīs in the Dhubela Museum is Śrī Taralā (Fickle, Glittering One), an exquisitely carved figure with aristocratic features and matted hair piled high on her head. Round-breasted, narrow-waisted and with gently swelling hips, this eight-armed Yoginī sits with one leg folded on her lotus seat and the other resting on a lotus flower; her *vāhana* is the *garuḍa.* Among her attendants and worshippers is a standing male holding a severed head by its hair. Śrī Ramaṇā (Lovely Young Woman) sits on a lotus with one leg resting against a partly kneeling male. In her hands are a shield, a skull-cup, and a severed head, and among the

Yoginī Tāraṇī (Saviour), Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

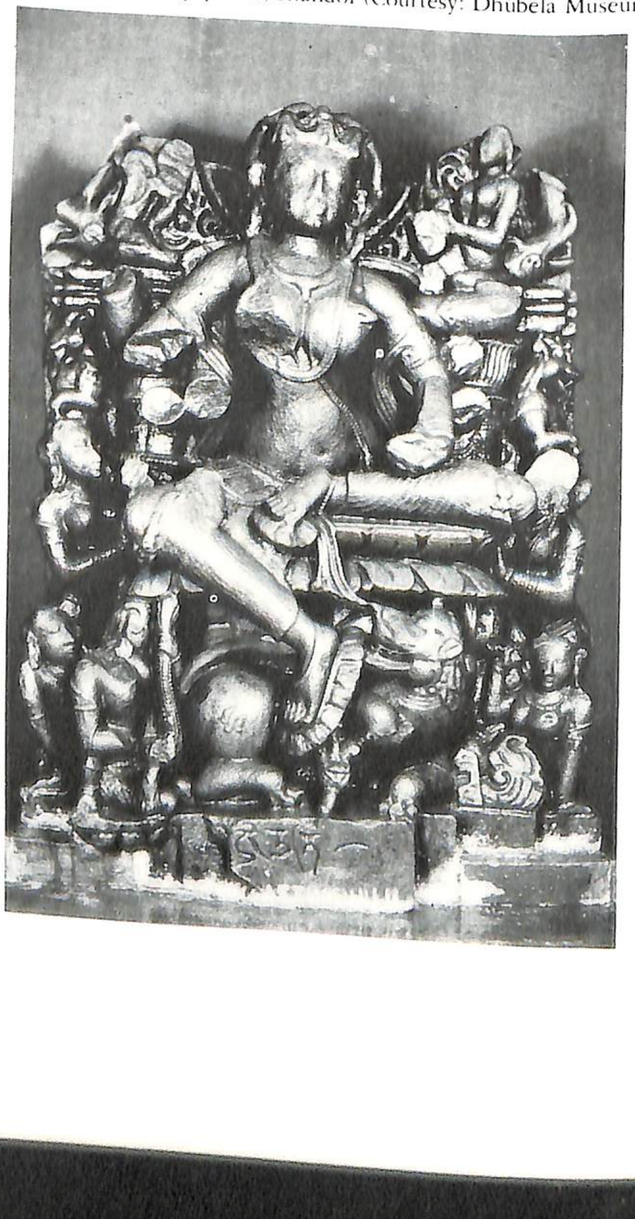
Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī Kṛṣṇā Bhagavatī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum) devotees is a standing male shown eating flesh of some sort. Śrī Kṛṣṇā Bhagavatī (Dark Goddess) reveals to us another localised name for Mahiṣamardinī. This twelve-armed Yoginī is undoubtedly the goddess who killed the buffalo demon, sitting calmly on her lotus seat, knowing that victory will be hers. Below is the buffalo with its decapitated head and the demon in human form emerging from its body. Behind the buffalo is the goddess's rearing lion. With one hand Kṛṣṇā Bhagavatī holds the demon by his hair, and some of the others hold a shield, a bell, and a flower, while her compassion is emphasized by the two hands which form the gestures of *varada* (granting your wish) and *abhaya* (freedom from fear).



Yoginī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

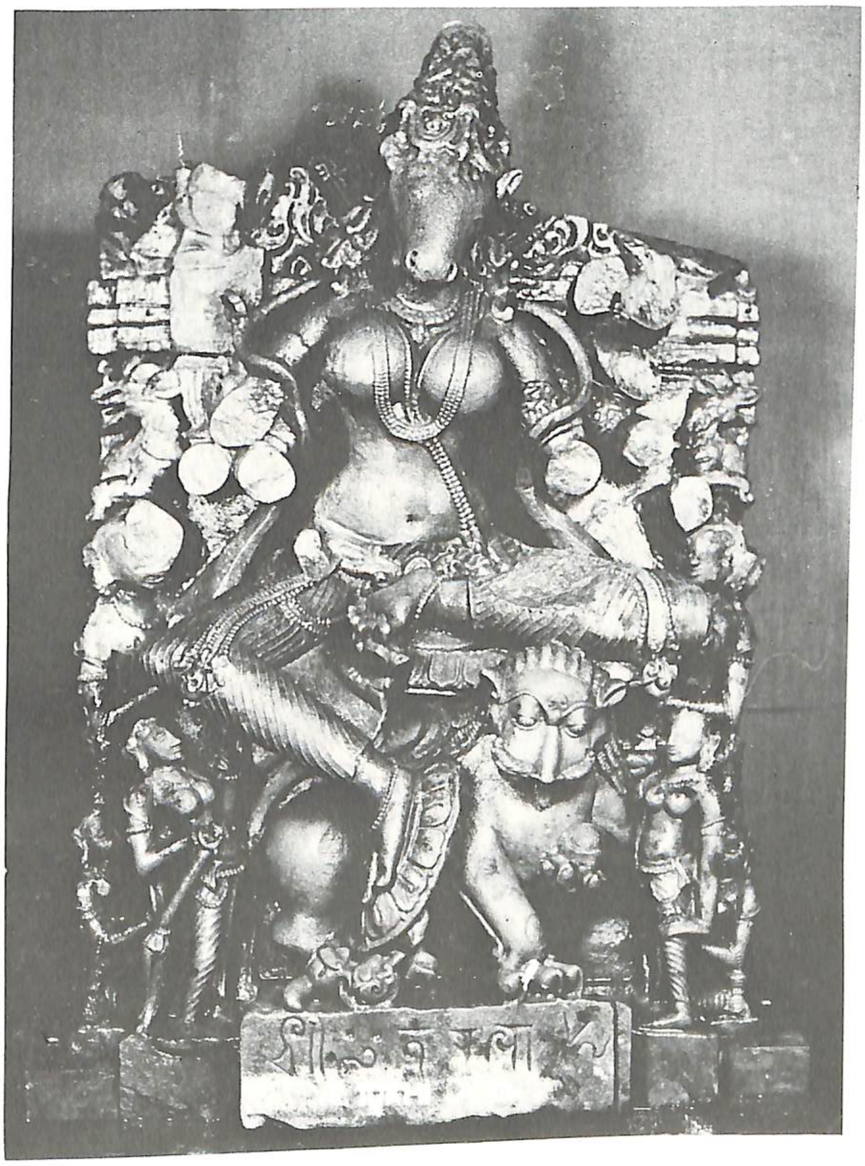
Śrī Tāraṇī (She who helps you cross over) holds a lotus, a bell, and a snake, and has a reclining male as *vāhana.* Attendants and worshippers include a male holding a severed head and brandishing a curved knife. Śrī Bhānavī (Lustrous, Glorious One) holds a severed human head, a shield and a bell and has a lion mount. The worshippers surrounding her all suggest their involvement in *śava sādhanā* rites. One standing male holds a severed head and a curved knife, and a standing female does likewise, while another female is shown eating a human hand. Śrī Itarālā is a beautiful-bodied, horse-headed Yoginī with a lion mount. She has remarkable sensual appeal and presents an impression of overwhelming nubility despite the animal head. All eight of her arms are broken. The name Itarālā, which is clearly written and allows of no other reading is puzzling, unless it is a scribe's error for Itarā or Vulgar One. If such a name seems incongruous for a goddess, it may be pointed out that several texts list a Yoginī named Lampaṭā (Lustful, Licentious One;), a term generally used in derogatory fashion in modern parlance.

Yoginī Śrī-Jautī (Jayantī), Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

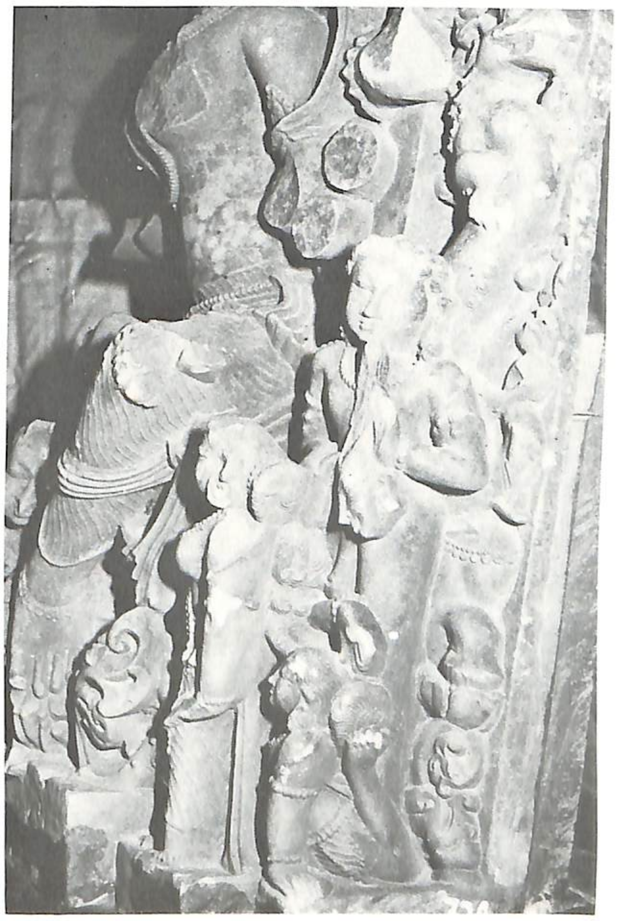


Śrī Tamakā, with a recumbent male on the pedestal, has one hand in the *varada* gesture and holds a skull-cup in another. The pedestal figures include a horse-headed female with a skull-cup and fly whisk, a horse-headed male and an actual horse. The Sanskrit term *tama* is used to denote anxiety or an object of terror; Tamakā could be the Yoginī of terror and anxiety. Śrī Bāṇapradā (She who gives you the arrow; the Huntress) holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in one hand and has a boar as mount. Śrī Vāsukī, holding a shield and a bell in two of her eight arms, has a peacock *vāhana* and a large snake hood behind her head; she seems to be the consort of the snake god Vāsukī. Śrī Jautī, probably a corruption of Jayantī or Victorious One, has a lion mount and holds a skull-cup in one of eight arms. Śrī Chapalā (Fickle One) also has a lion mount.

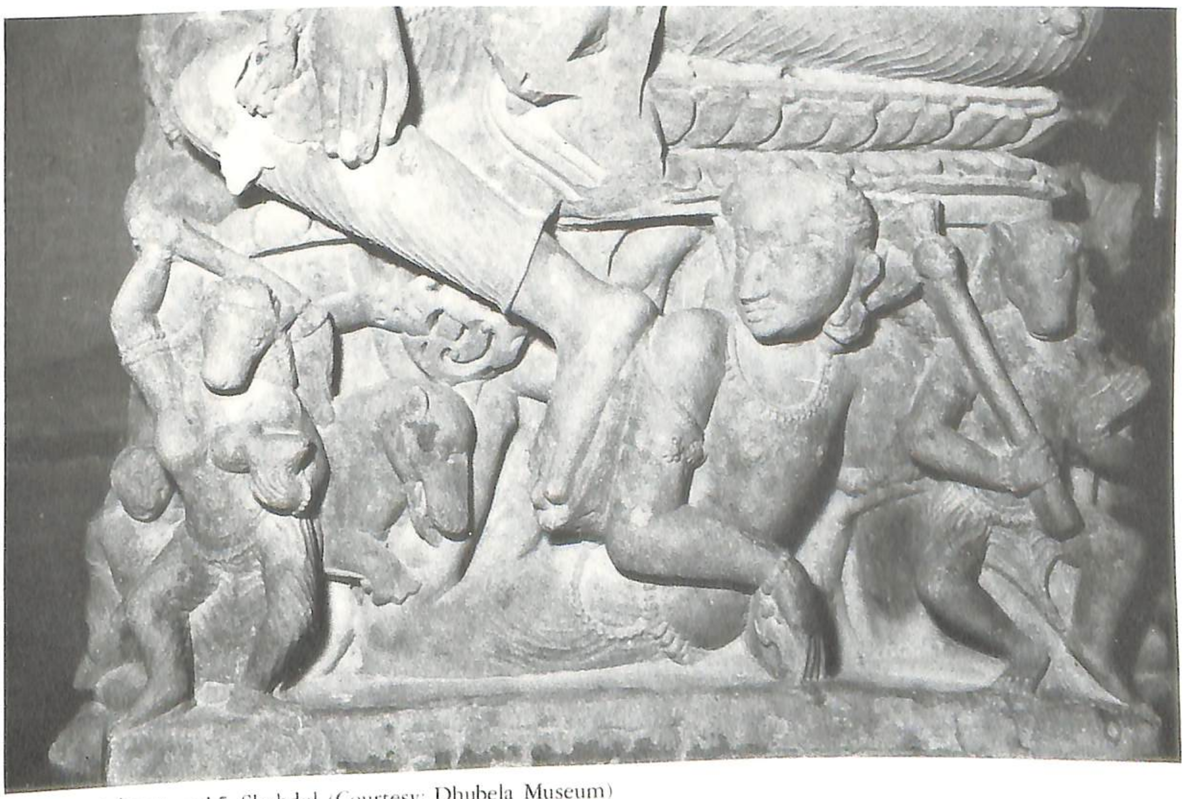
The villages of the Shahdol district contain some iconographically interesting, though badly damaged, seated Yoginīs. Śrī Vārāhī consists today only of an intact pedestal with a clearly inscribed label, a buffalo mount and boar-faced worshippers, one of whom holds a severed head. Śrī Vajrā (She of the thunderbolt) has a *makara vāhana* and holds a discus and a water vessel. Śrī Yamā, consort of god Yama, again consists of only an intact pedestal with her buffalo mount in the centre, worshippers on either side and clearly engraved label. Śrī Varuṇī is a relatively intact image holding a severed head, a skull-cup and a curved knife. Her peacock mount is surrounded by her attendants. A cow-faced (perhaps



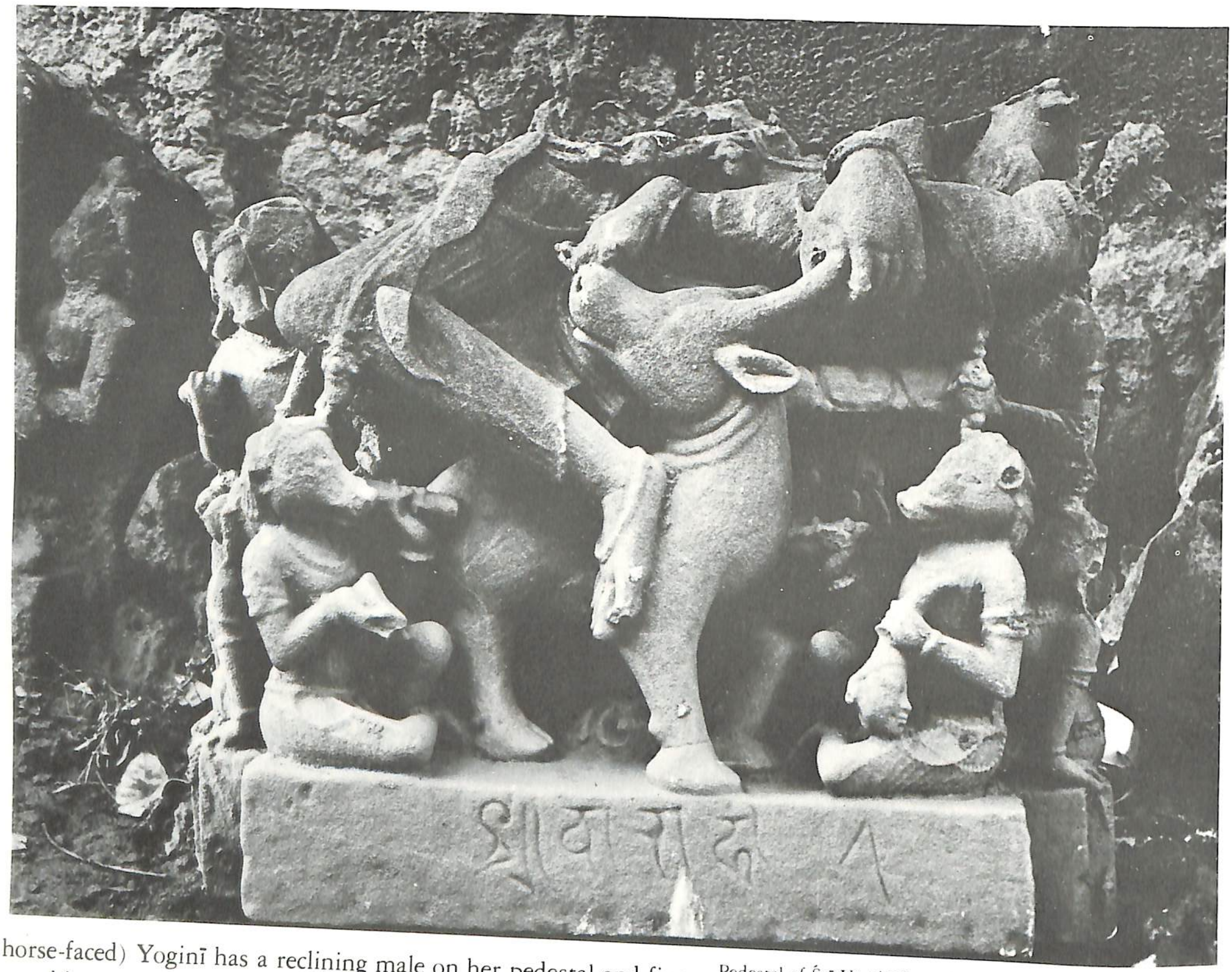
Horse-headed Śrī Taralā, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



Pedestal of Śrī-Bhānavī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



Pedestal of Śrī Tamakā, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



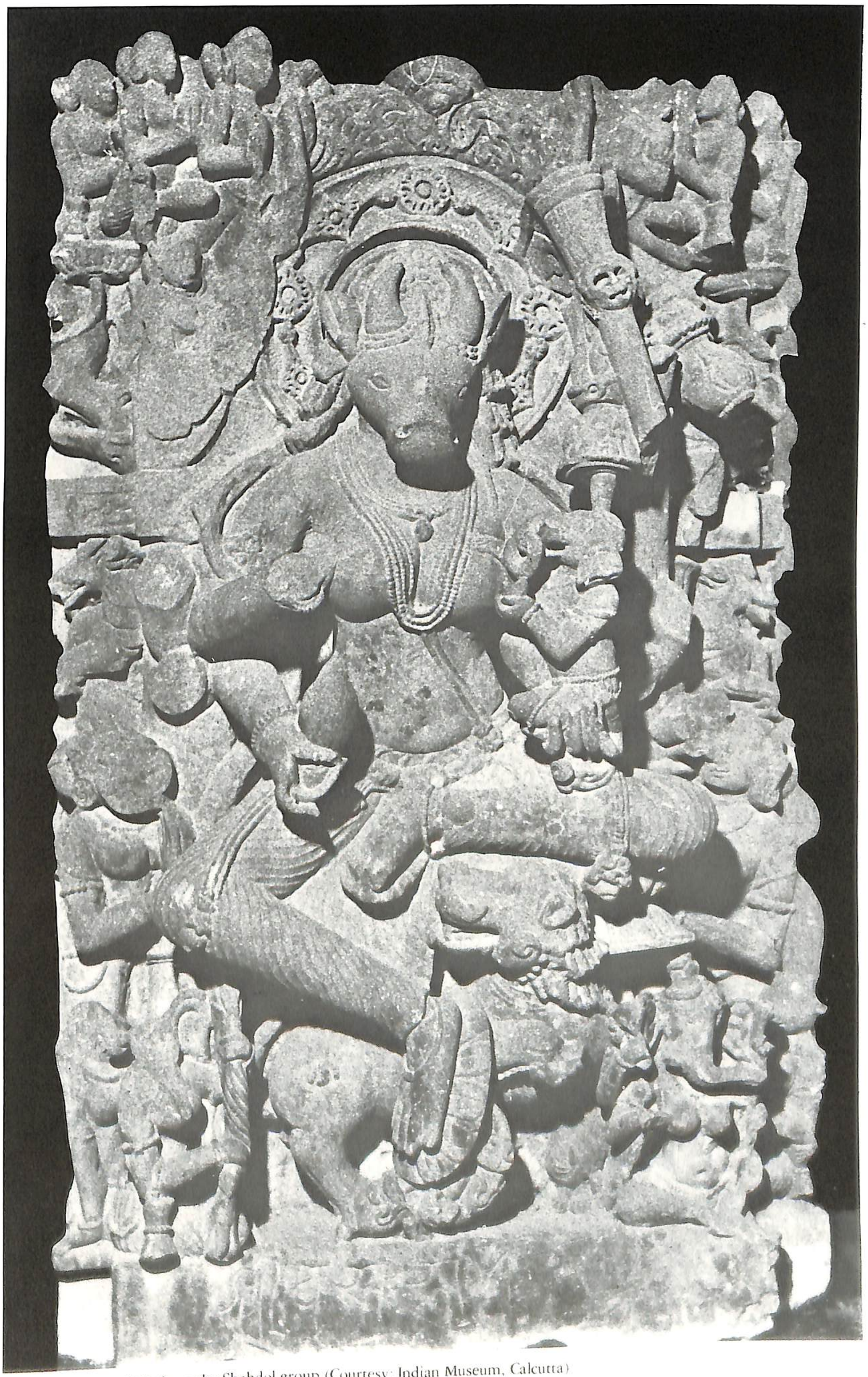
Pedestal of Śrī Vārāhī from Shahdol village (Courtesy: American Institute of Indian Studies)

horse-faced) Yoginī has a reclining male on her pedestal and five worshippers on either side. Two of her ten arms hold a shield and a bell. The inscription is not clear but seems to commence with Gava...; this prefix would indicate a connection with the cow. Other Yoginī fragments have badly defaced inscriptions and mutilated figures.

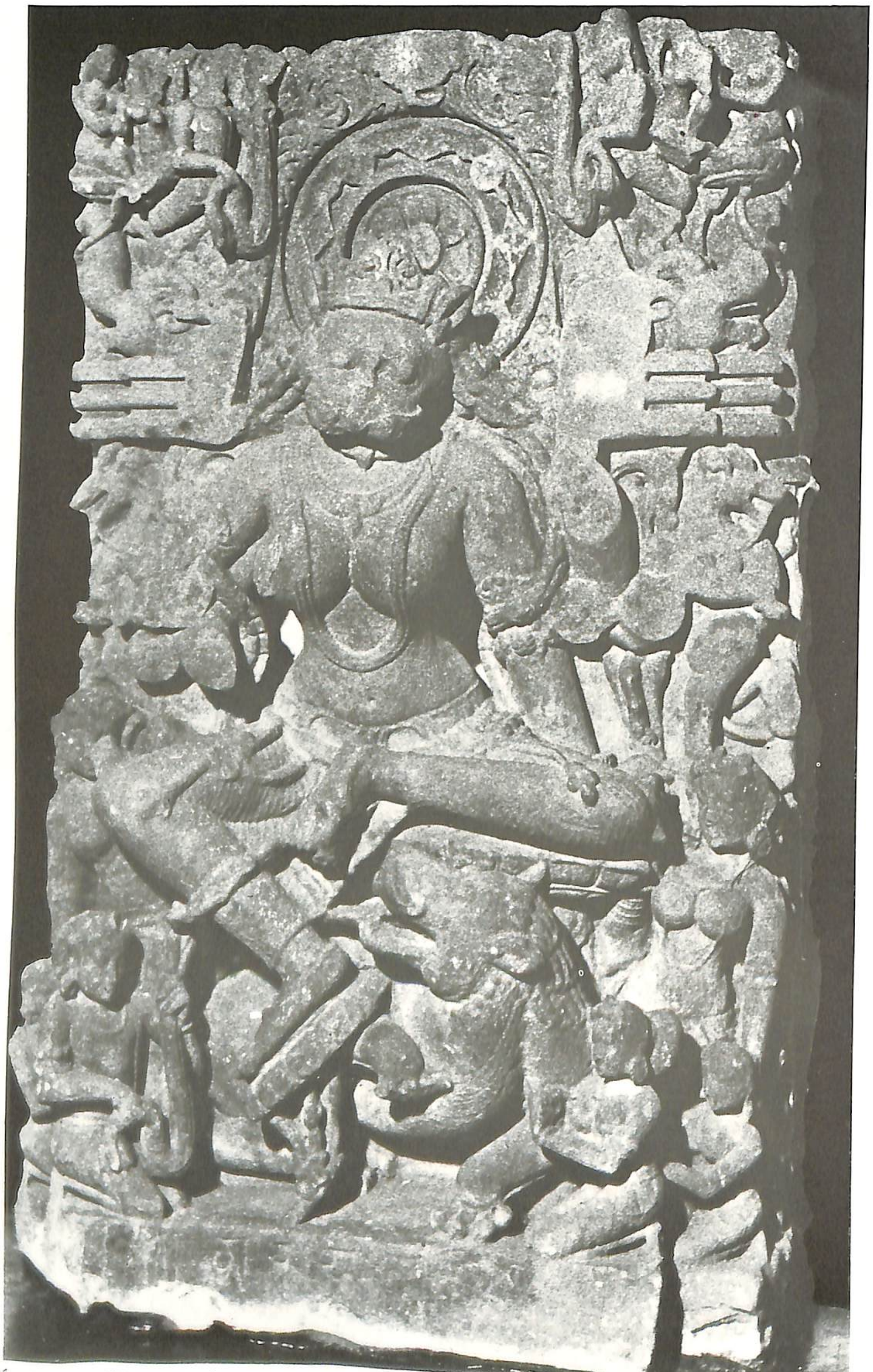
The Indian Museum images include the Yoginī Śrī Vasabha (from Vṛṣabhā or bull), a bull-faced Yoginī who supports on her knee a child with an elephant head.[10] She has a bull as *vāhana* and her attendants and worshippers include an elephant-headed female. Lion-faced Narasata is clearly Nārasimhī, shown with her lion mount and attendants. Śrī Nainī, with a seven-hooded snake behind her head, is clearly Nāginī, the snake goddess. She has a lion mount with attendants and worshippers on either side. The Mātṛkā Indrāṇī is also present.

Shahdol's Standing Yoginīs

Only ten images from the Shahdol group of standing Yoginīs are today traceable. A twelve-armed Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī with her lion to one side, stands firmly on the ground with one leg crushing the vanquished buffalo. No demon in human form is to be seen here. The only objects recognisable in her hands are a severed

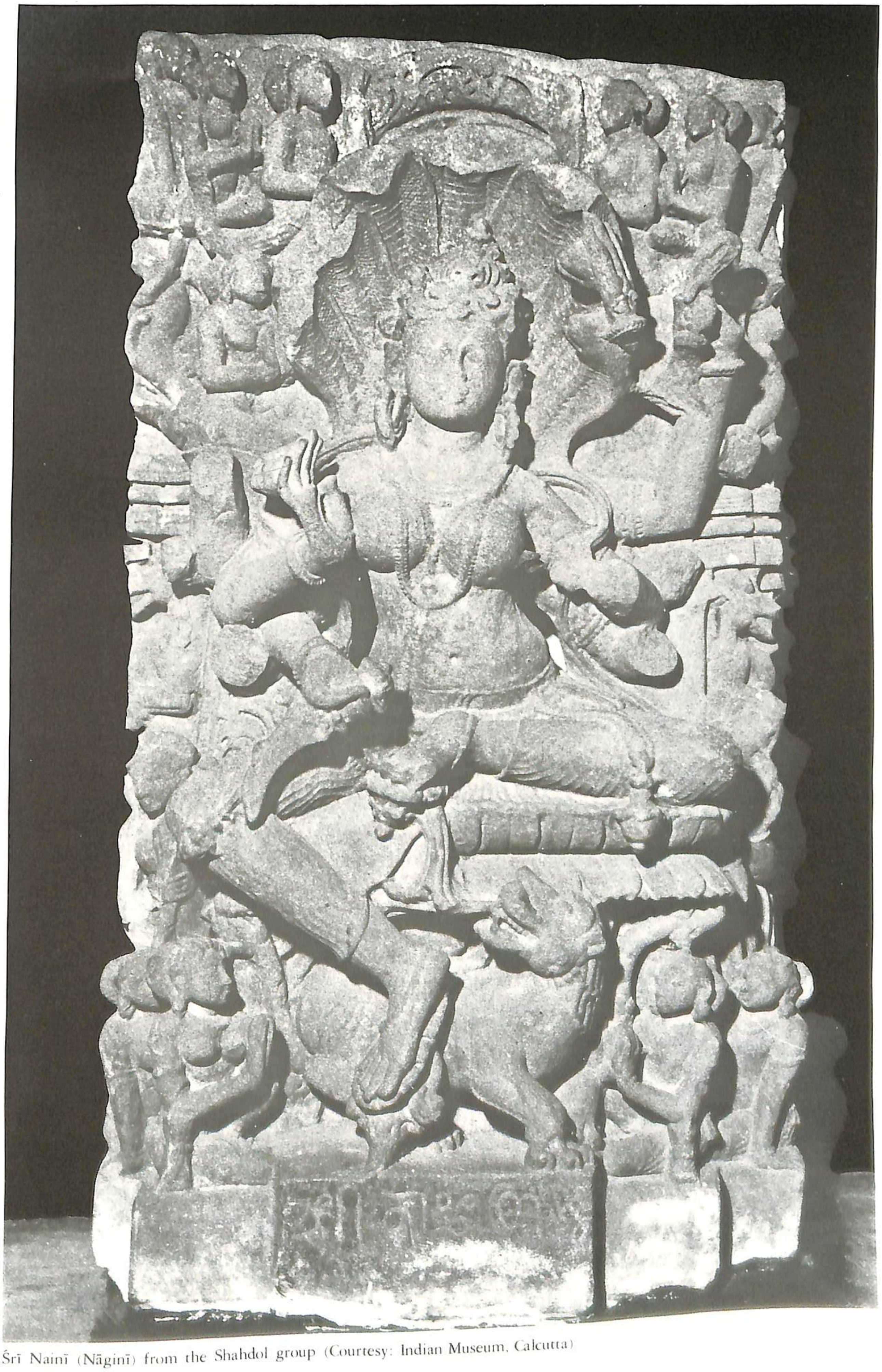


Śrī Vasabhā (Vṛṣabhā) from the Shahdol group (Courtesy: Indian Museum, Calcutta)



Śrī Narasata (Nārasimhī) from the Shahdol group (Courtesy: Indian Museum, Calcutta)

human head and a shield. It is unfortunate that the inscription is defaced as it may otherwise have given us another local name for this goddess. Śrī Kapālinī (She of the skull-cup bowl) stands firmly on her pedestal, holding a conch, a disc and a lotus, and with several attendants and devotees. Śrī Thabha is perhaps to be interpreted as "She who paralyses" (From *stambha* or the suppression of any force by magical powers). She holds a trident, a bell, a shield, a wheel and



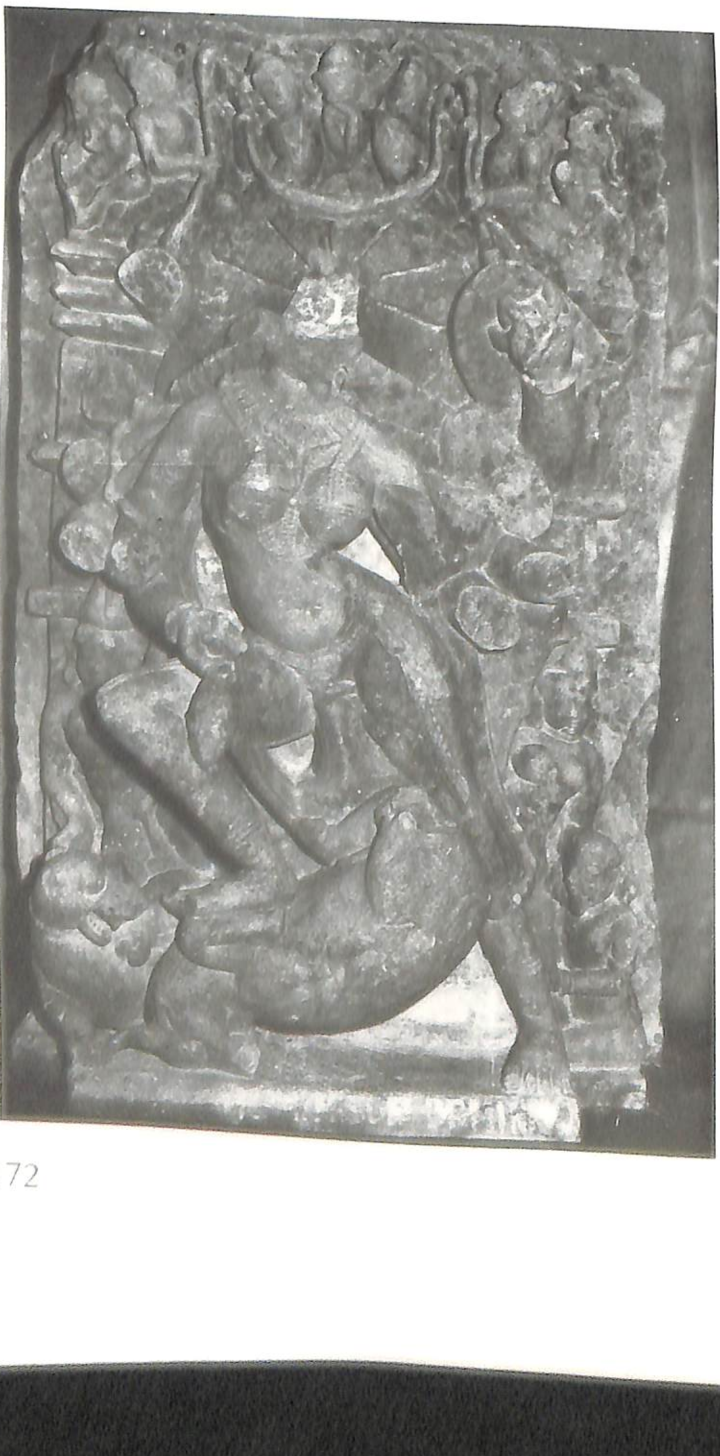
Śrī Nainī (Nāginī) from the Shahdol group (Courtesy: Indian Museum, Calcutta) a kettle-drum, and is surrounded by devotees. Śrī Badarī is an elegantly poised Yoginī in a dancing pose, surrounded by musicians and attendants and wearing a garland of human skulls. Three more standing Yoginīs are to be seen in the Dhubela Museum, one of whom is horse-faced; unfortunately, since all the pedestals are broken, the inscriptions are lost to us.

A few partially preserved standing Yoginīs may be seen in the Shahdol villages. One four-armed Yoginī with a damaged inscription, wears a garland of skulls and dances on a reclining male. In one hand she holds a severed human head, while attendants hold skull-cups and tridents. Another badly damaged standing image seems to represent Cāmuṇḍā, standing on a rounded platform placed upon a recumbent male, and wearing a garland of skulls and a skull head dress. She is a fearsome skeletal figure with hollow eyes and gaping mouth she has twelve skeletal arms and is surrounded by skeletal attendants.

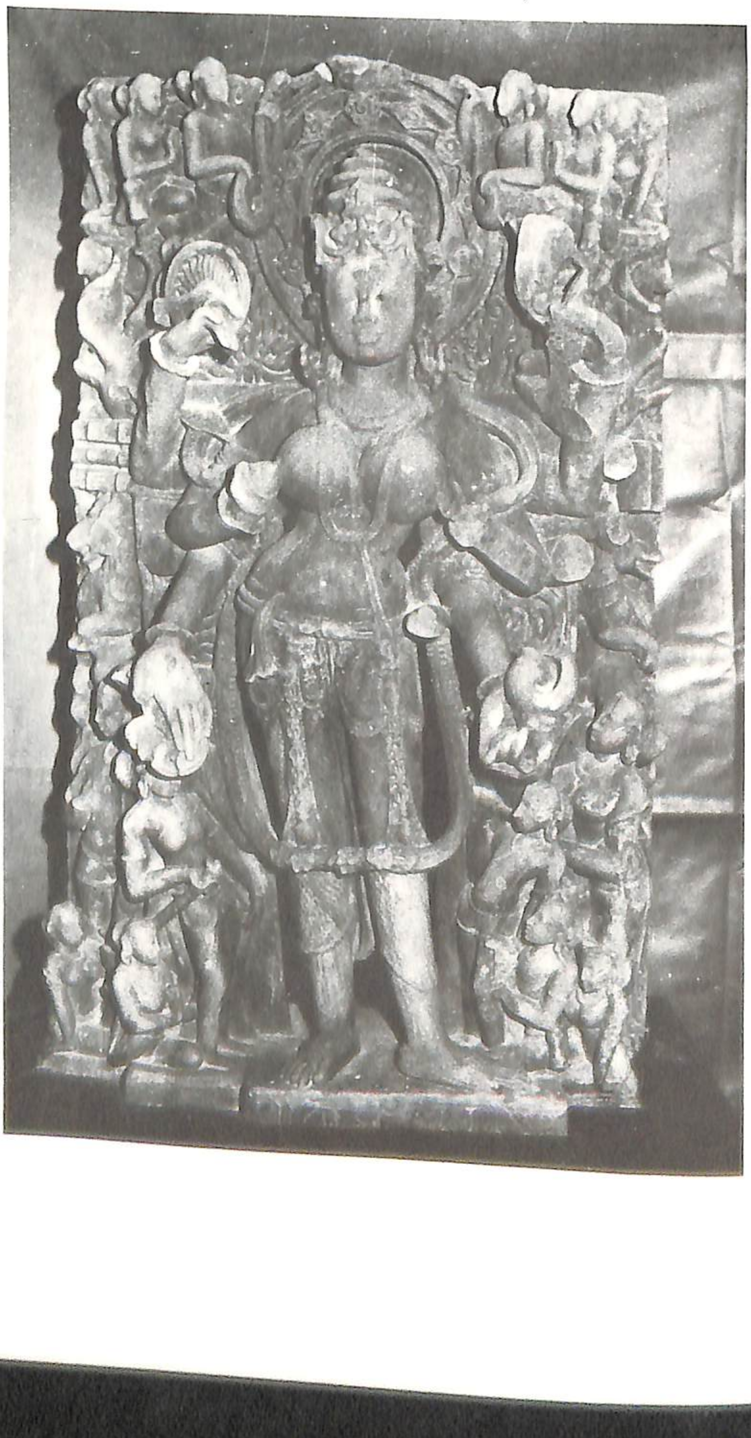
Date of the Shahdol Temples: palaeography and style

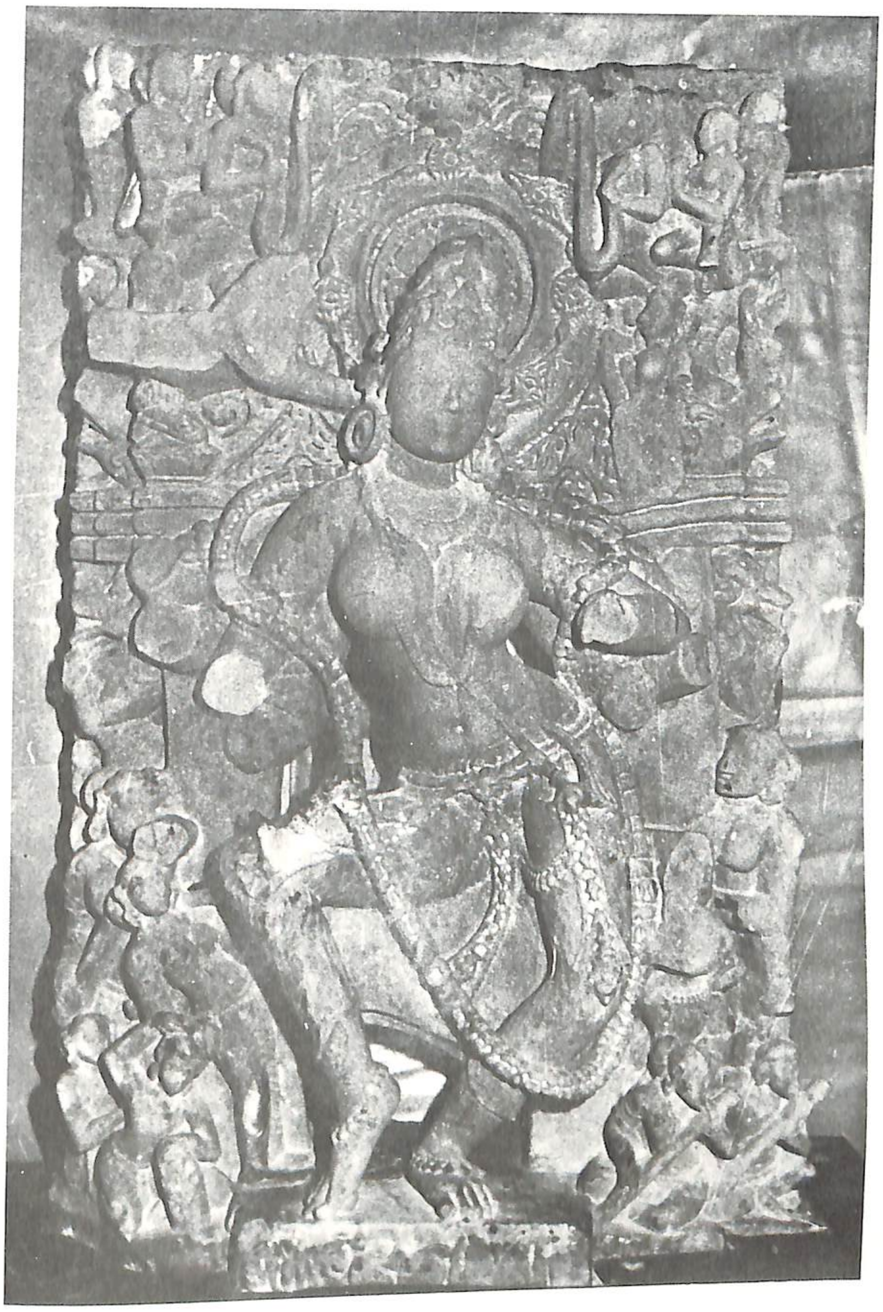
The letters of the labels inscribed along the base of the Shahdol Yoginīs are more angular and stylised than those at Bheraghat. The

Standing Mahiṣamardinī Yoginī from Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



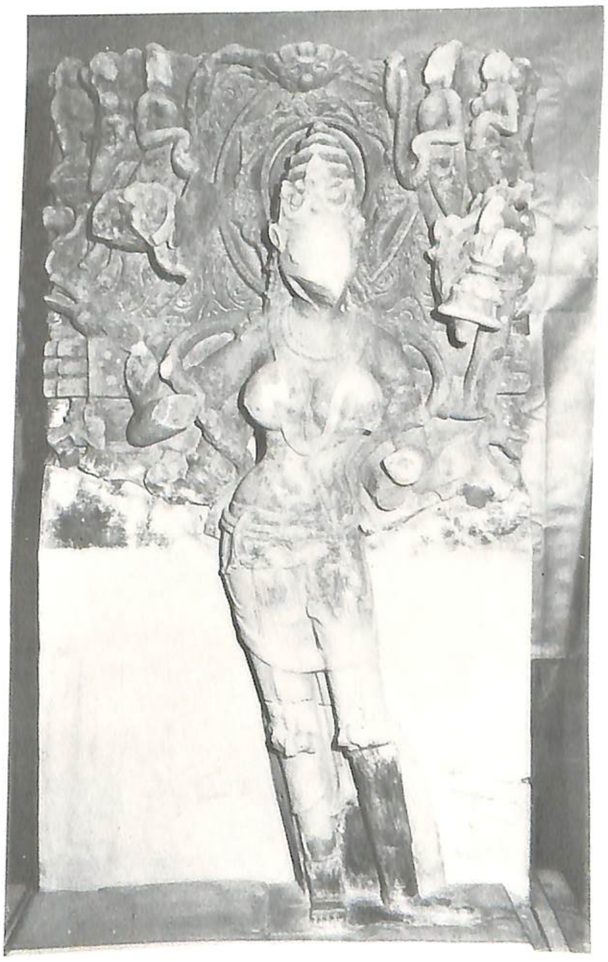
Śrī Kapālinī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



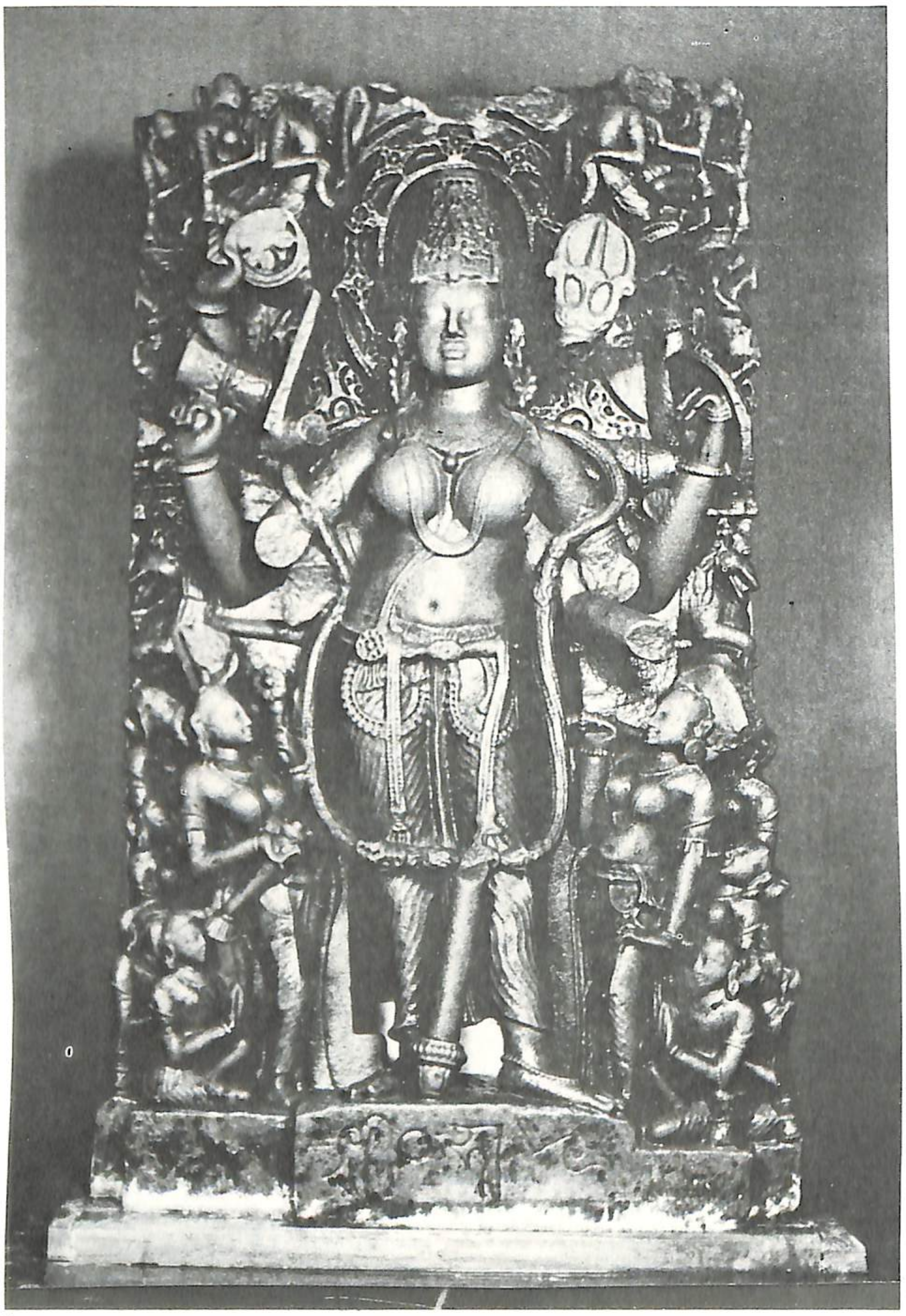


Śrī Baḍarī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

Horse-headed standing Yoginī, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)



lettering is precise and the engraving was obviously in the hands of a good scribe. As far as dating is concerned, we can say with some assurance that the style of writing on the Shahdol labels is earlier than that of the Naresar labels of A.D. 1189 as well as those of the two later sets of inscriptions pertaining to Bheraghat—the inscription of Narasiṁha of A.D. 1156 and that of Vijayasiṁha of A.D. 1189. These records reveal the typical proto-Nāgarī forms of the letters *ta, na* and *sa,* while the Shahdol labels have the earlier forms of these letters. Compared to the Bheraghat Yoginī labels, Shahdol has a more developed form of the letter *ha,* and the occasional triangular headmark seen at Bheraghat has been totally dropped in favour of the line headmark. Tentatively, we would suggest a date in the last quarter of the 11th century for the Shahdol inscriptions. Stylistically too the Shahdol Yoginīs appear to be later than those at Naresar or Bheraghat. It would thus seem that the two Shahdol temples of the Yoginīs were constructed sometime in the second half of the 11th century.



Śrī Thabha, Shahdol (Courtesy: Dhubela Museum)

10. The South Indian Yoginīs

In the early years of this century, Jouveau-Dubreuil, that indefatigable French scholar of south Indian art, collected a group of images of goddesses which are now preserved in various museums in Europe and America. There are at least eleven of these images though precise information on the number recovered is not available. Their identification poses a problem, but it is certain that they are not part of a grouping of the familiar Mātṛkās of the Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Aindrī, Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍā series. Apart from the fact that there are at least eleven goddesses, not one of the familiar Mothers is represented among them. The group includes also three emaciated Cāmuṇḍā-like figures, thus ruling out the possibility of identification with the standard Mātṛkā group.

It has been suggested that these goddesses are part of a group of sixteen Mothers,[1] but such a characterisation also raises problems. These sixteen Mātṛkās are Gaurī, Padmā, Śacī, Medhā, Sāvitrī, Vijayā, Jayā, Devasenā, Svadhā, Svāhā, Mātā, Lokamātā, Dhṛti, Puṣṭi, Tuṣṭi and Kuladevatā. This group of sixteen Mothers headed by Gaurī are visualised as pacific by nature, while the goddesses we are considering have several attributes indicating that they are not entirely benign. Many of them have their hair splayed out behind their heads, giving them a wild, fierce appearance and reminding us of descriptions and sculptural depictions of the Yoginīs as *ūrdhvakeśī* (with hair standing up around the head). Phrases like *ūrdhvakeśī* and *jvālakeśī* (with flaming hair) are applied also to Cāmuṇḍā and Kālī, but not to the peaceful Mātṛkās. The parted lips of these images reveal curved, pointed fangs at either end of the mouth, while in some instances, they even appear to hold a corpse in their mouth. More than one goddess has a snake knotted around her to form her sacred thread, while one has knotted snakes as a breastband. Snakes and skulls appear frequently in their headgear, while occasionally the sacred thread is composed of skulls strung together, one goddess sporting a human corpse as earring. Each goddess carries a *kapāla* or skull-cup in one hand. These attributes do not seem consistent with an identification of the images with the sixteen Mothers.

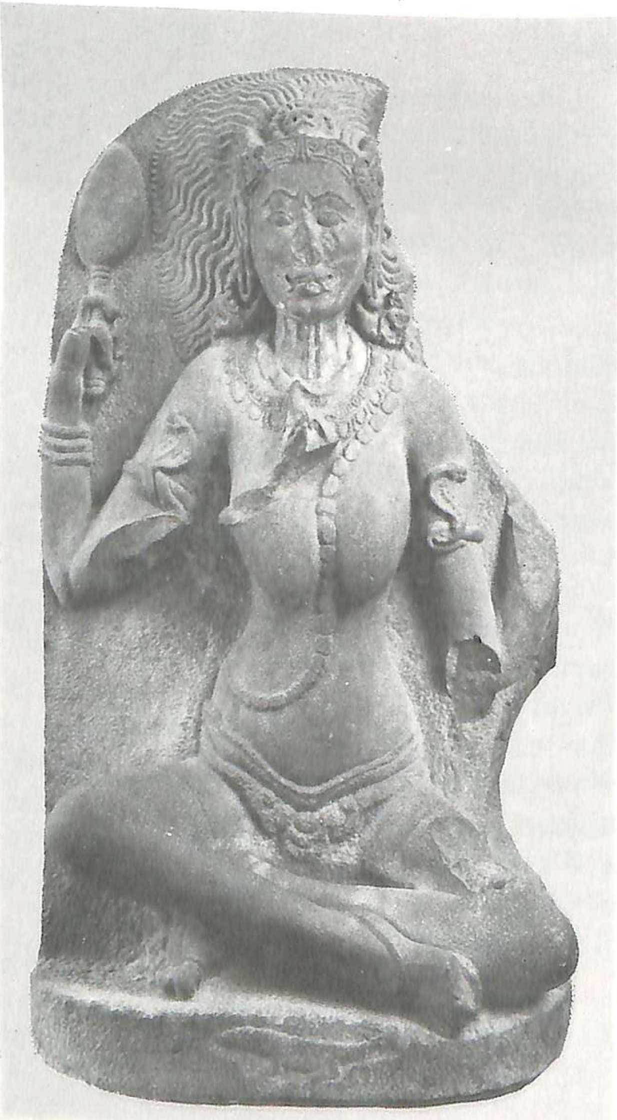
As far as it has been possbile to determine, no other group of stone images of the sixteen Mātṛkās is known to exist. Instances are known of painted depictions of the sixteen Mothers as subsidiary figures in Maṇḍalas[2]; however, such Mothers do not apear to belong to the Gaurī series, since they comprise the eight Mātṛkās of the familiar Brāhmī series, together with eight others. It appears that the concept of the sixteen Mātṛkās of the Gaurī series known from textual references, failed to gain sufficient popularity for these Mothers to be frequently portrayed in painting or sculpture.

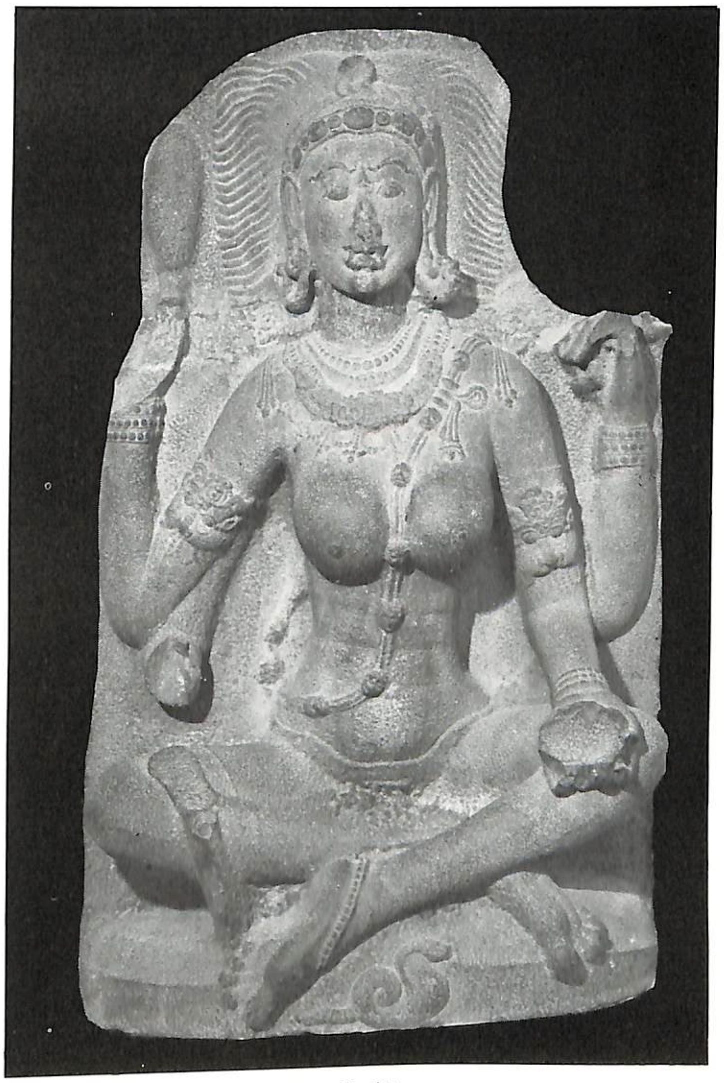
An analysis of the various lists of the sixty-four Yoginīs detailed in Appendices I and II, reveals an association between the sixteen Mātṛkās and the sixty-four Yoginīs[3]. We divide listings of the Yoginīs into two broad categories on the basis of whether or not the sixty-four names include the Mātṛkās of the familiar Brāhmī series. On examining the Mātṛkās-inclusive tradition, we find that these Yoginī lists frequently include seven or eight names from the set of sixteen Mātṛkās. One example of this is the *Kālikā Purāṇa* list which includes seven from the group of sixteen Mātṛkās. Other instances of the inclusion, as Yoginīs, of goddesses from this series of sixteen, are contained in two unpublished *Durgā Pūjā* manuscripts, and in the names of Yoginīs recited in contemporary worship at the Kāmākhyā temple. In certain traditions then, the sixteen Mātṛkās are included among the sixty-four Yoginīs. Thus, there appears to be a strong possibility that these eleven images from south India formed part of a group of Yoginīs, although the small number of images available rules out certainty on the matter.

Carved against a slab of granite with a rounded top, each Yoginī sits cross-legged on the ground with her *vāhana* lightly incised on the narrow band below her. Their faces are oval with exaggeratedly arched eyebrows almost meeting at the centre, and the full sensuous lips are parted to reveal fangs. A headband concealing the hairline gives them a stern appearance and adds to their majestic bearing. Some of the Yoginīs wear a tall conical crown that holds their flowing locks in place, while other have their loose tresses splayed around their heads and arranged sometimes like a halo. The goddesses have gently sloping shoulders, full breasts and narrow hips characteristic of early Cola sculptures. Following the classic description of a beautiful woman as *trivalī taraṅgiṇī* (with three waves), they generally have three folds marked on their waists. They wear several necklaces and a sacred thread which lies in the cleft between their breasts, while placed low on their hips is a short skirt extending to mid-thigh level. Earrings are heavy, ear lobes are markedly elongated and several wear a lion-head armlet. All the goddesses have four arms and carry a variety of objects which always includes a skull-cup.

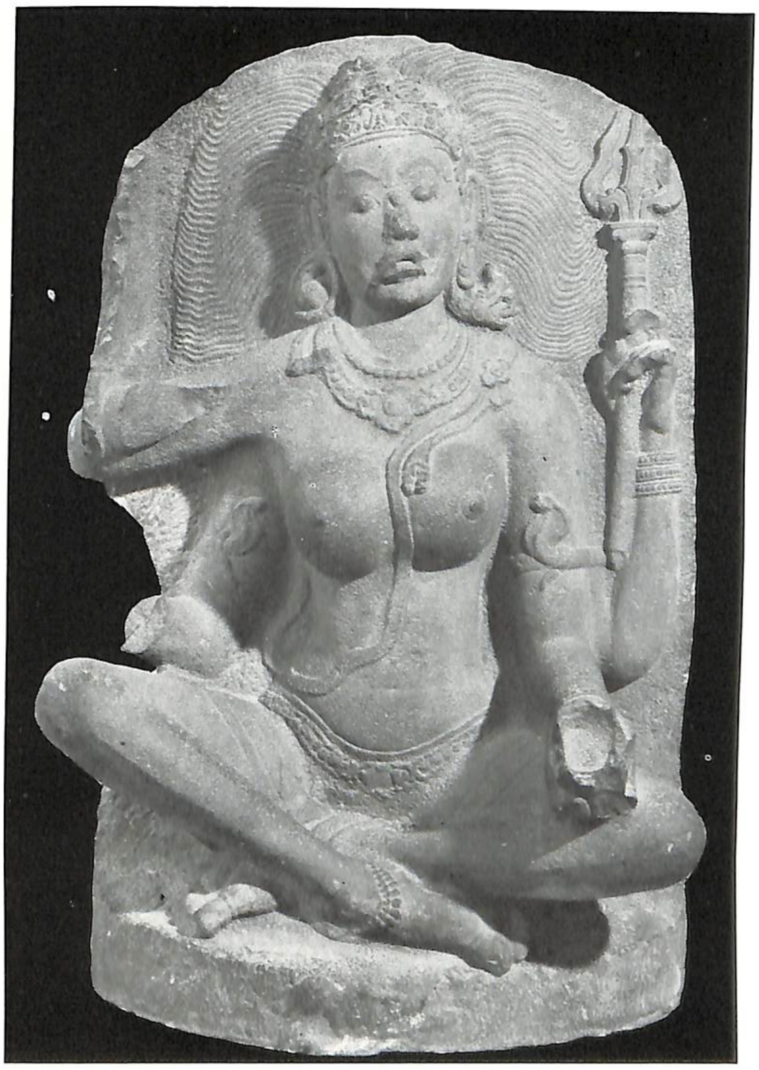
The Museé Guimet in Paris has three magnificent examples of these Yoginīs, all three with their tresses splayed out in fearsome disarray. The first goddess with her hollow cheeks, bulging eyes, curved pointed fangs, prominent neck tendons and elongated breasts, presents an awe-inspiring sight. Her headband has a skull as a centrepiece and she wears snake armlets and *makara* earrings. The goddess's vehicle is an iguana which, it has been pointed out,[4] is the vehicle of the Mātṛkā Gaurī. However, it does not seem likely that this fearsome goddess represents the gentle Gaurī, as indeed a glance at images clearly identified as Gaurī will indicate.[5] It may also be pointed out that the meaning of the term *gaurī* includes shining, brilliant, pure, clean, beautiful, and has no association with anything fearful. The second Guimet goddess has a snake mount,

Yoginī (Courtesy: Museé Guimet, Paris)





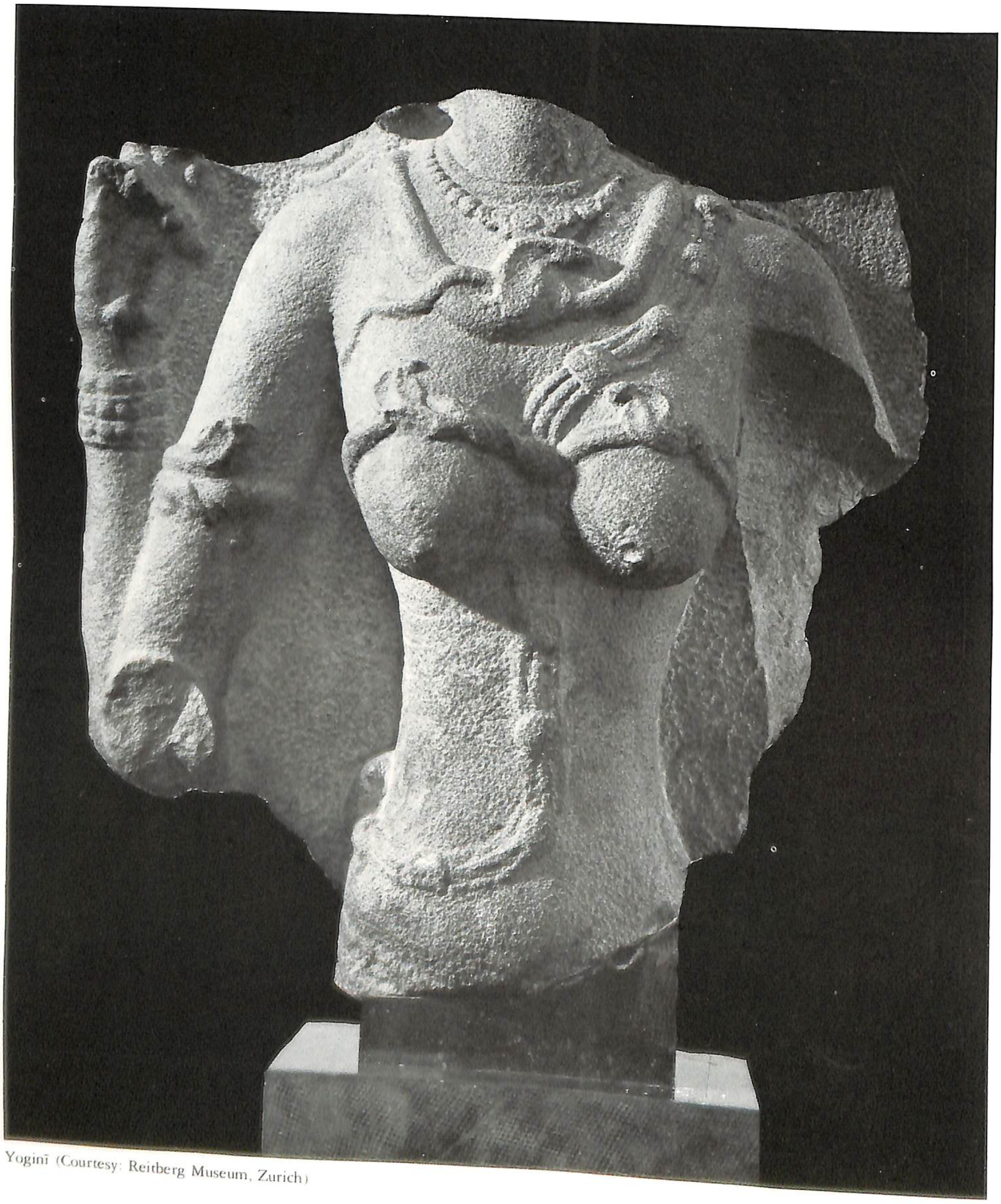
Yoginī (Courtesy: Museé Guimet, Paris)



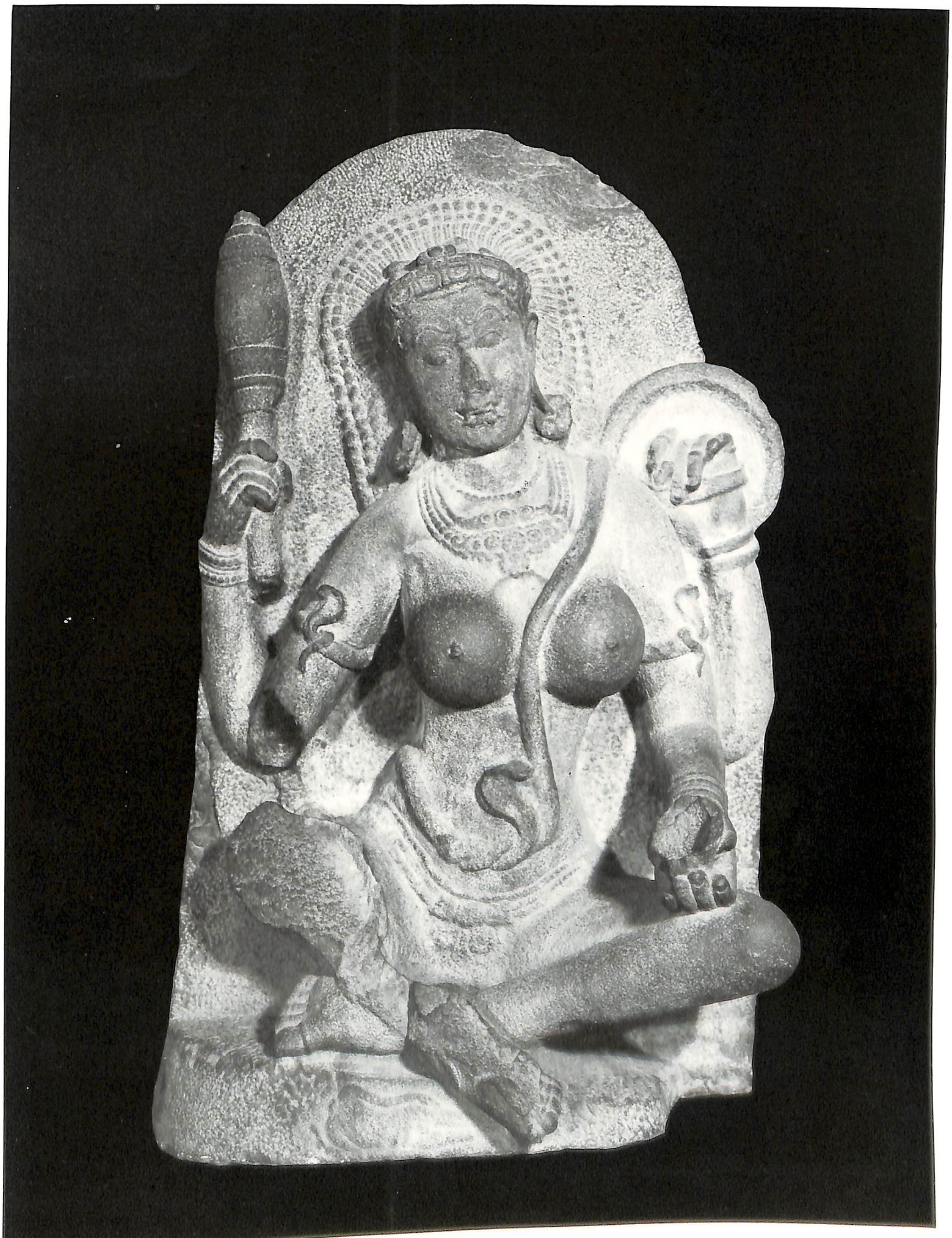
Yoginī (Courtesy: Museé Guimet, Paris)

wears snake earrings and has a snake hood crowning her headband. She has naturalistically shaped full breasts, a narrow waist and slender hips. Incidentally, Sivaramamurti has identified both, this goddess and the one with the iguana mount have been identified as Cāmuṇḍā[6] indicating the ambiguity that exists on the identification of the images. Since neither figure is emaciated nor displays any of the well known attributes of Cāmuṇḍā, it is difficult to accept the identification. The third of the Guimet figures holds a trident and skull-cup and has a bird *vāhana.* A magnificent torso of a Yoginī belonging to this series is in the Reitberg Museum in Zurich. The fragment shows a thin, emaciated goddess with snakes knotted around as a breastband, and with snake armlets and snake necklaces. A few strands of loosely splayed out hair are recognisable. If at all an image is to be identified with Cāmuṇḍā, this one would be the most appropriate.

A fine Yoginī with flowing locks arranged neatly in halo fashion is in the Detroit Institute of Arts. She has full rounded breasts and lying in the deep cleft between in a knotted snake serving as her sacred thread. She holds a club, a shield and a skull-cup and has a corpse as *vāhana.* Rather than displaying fangs, she appears to hold in her mouth a corpse that protrudes from either end. A Yoginī from the Royal Ontario Museum also has hair arranged around her head like a halo, with large ringlet curls forming the border of the



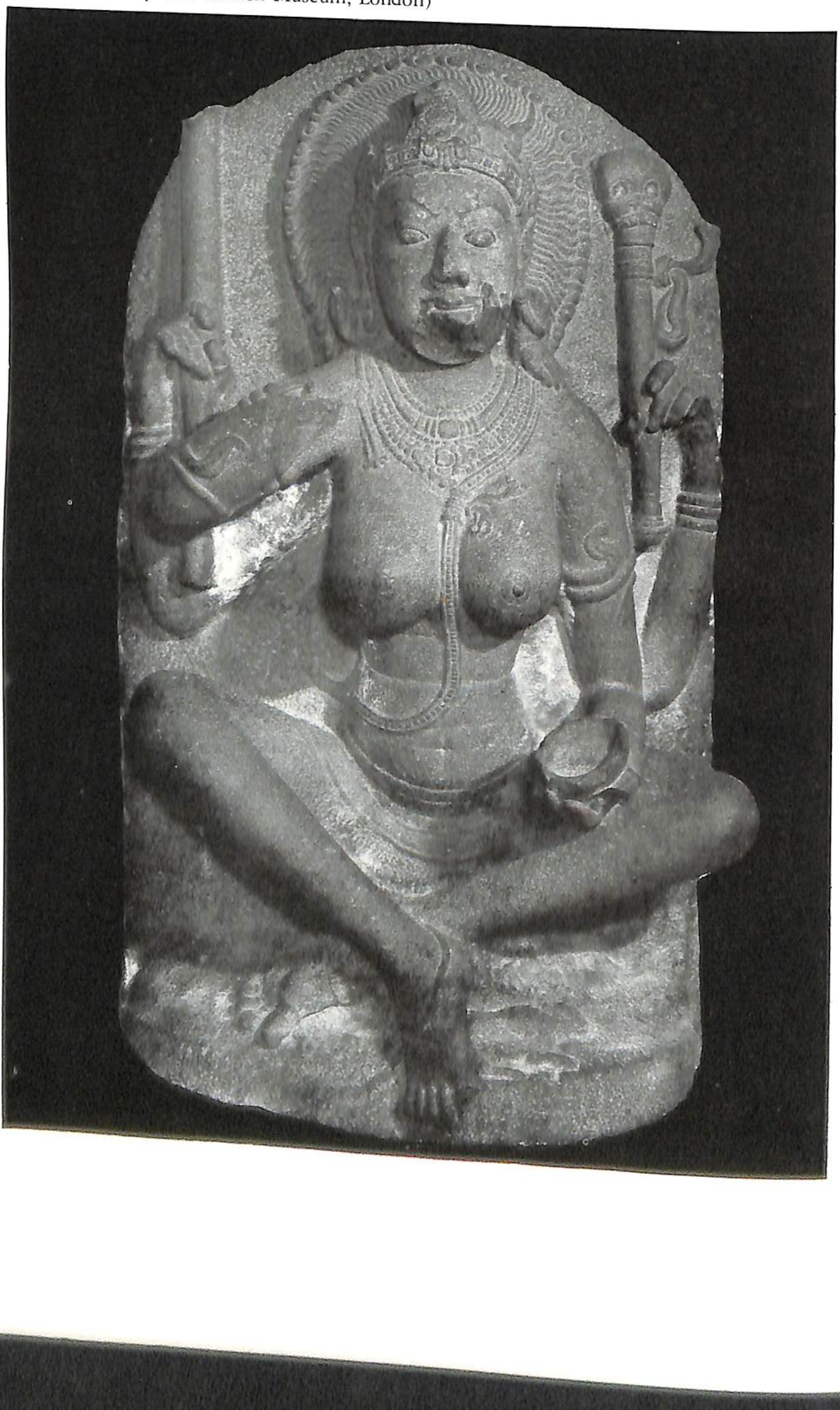
Yoginī (Courtesy: Reitberg Museum, Zurich)

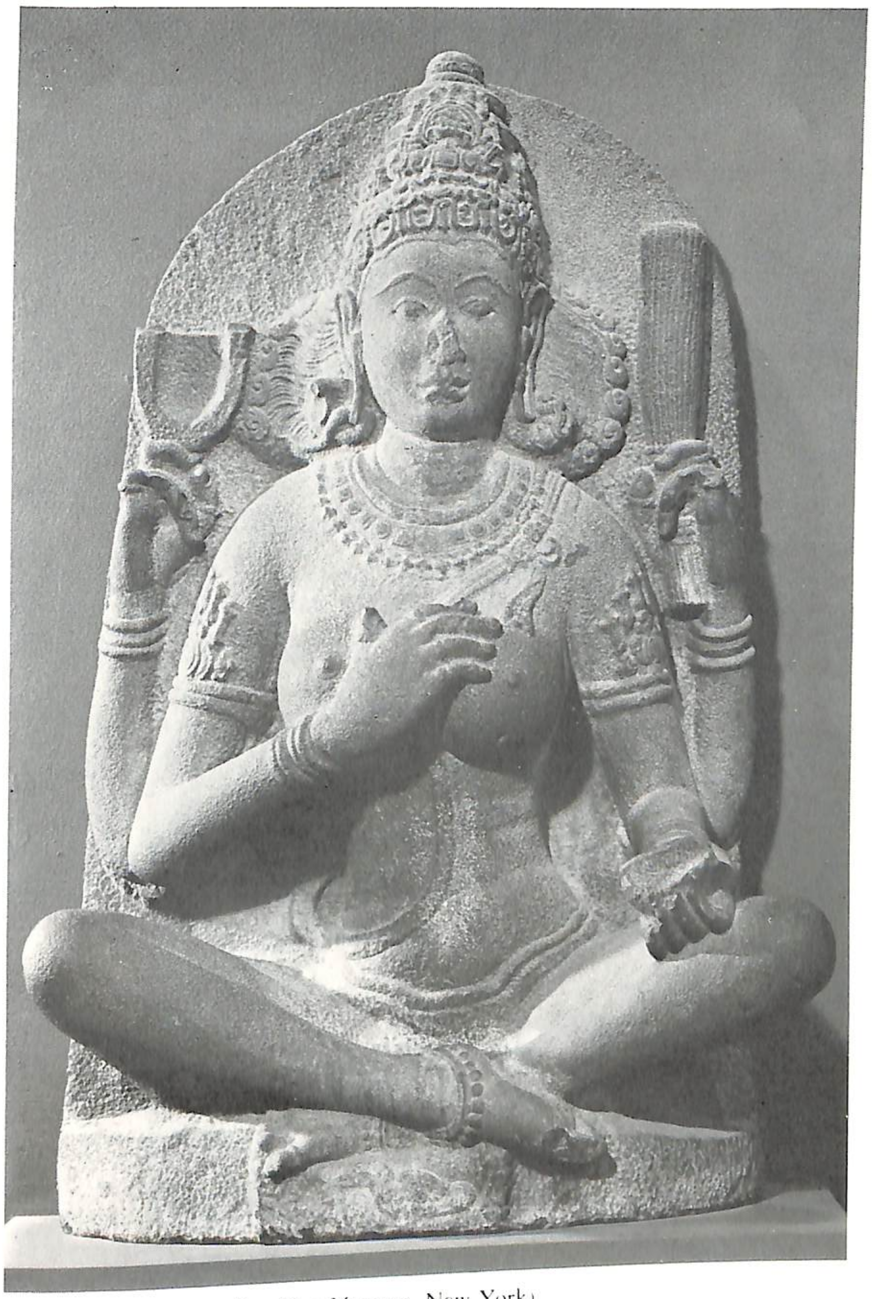


Yoginī (Courtesy: Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit) "halo". She has a snake *vāhana,* wears snake armlets and has knotted snakes and a skull as the centre-piece of her headband. An axe, a noose and a skull-cup are held in three of her hands, while the fourth is in the *jñāna mudrā* or the gesture of knowledge. The British Museum Yoginī, a fearsome goddess with hair in halo arrangement, has a corpse as mount. She wears a skull in her headband, has snake armlets and has a human hand as earring.

The image in the Brooklyn Museum wears a tall conical crown that holds her loose tresses in place. Her *vāhana* is a goose; she holds a head of corn, a winnower and a skull-cup, while her fourth hand is placed in front of her breast in a gesture signifying self-absorption. It is interesting to note tht a Yoginī with a winnower and the goose as mount is seen in the Hirapur Yoginī temple. The crowned Yoginī in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has a bird mount and she holds a spear and *kamaṇḍalu.* The Yoginī in the Kansas collection, wearing a crown over her flowing locks, has a bird *vāhana.* She holds a stylised flower in one hand, while a finger

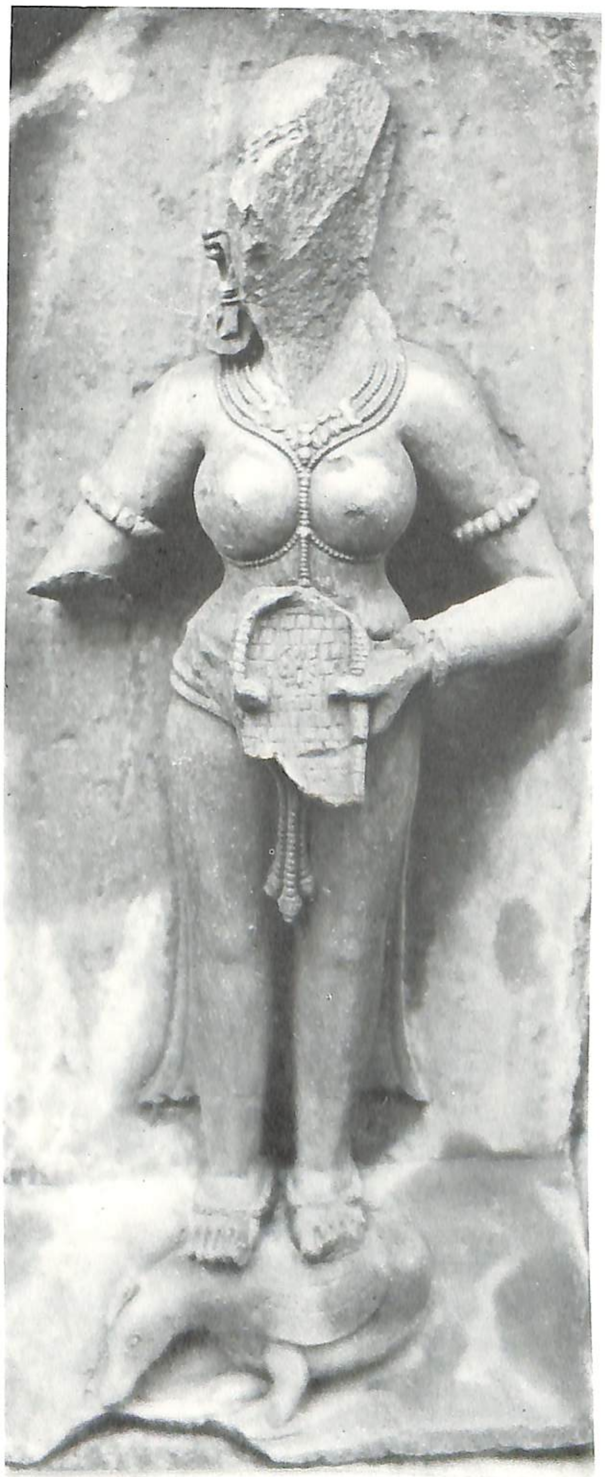
Yoginī (Courtesy: The British Museum, London)





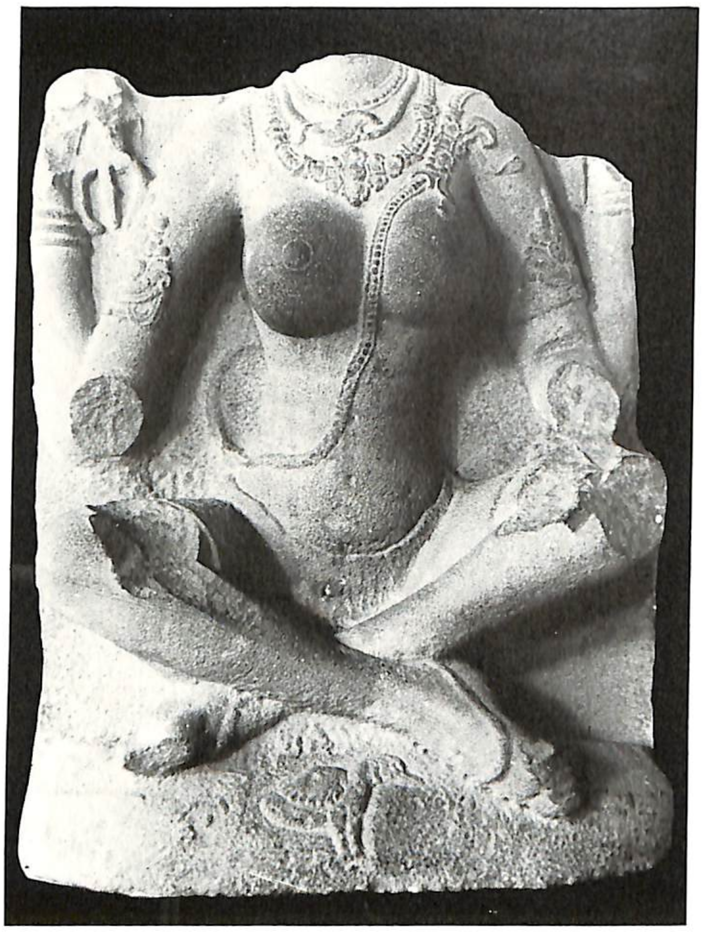
Yoginī (Courtesy: The Brooklyn Museum, New York)

Yoginī with winnower and goose *vāhana* from Hirapur temple (Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India)



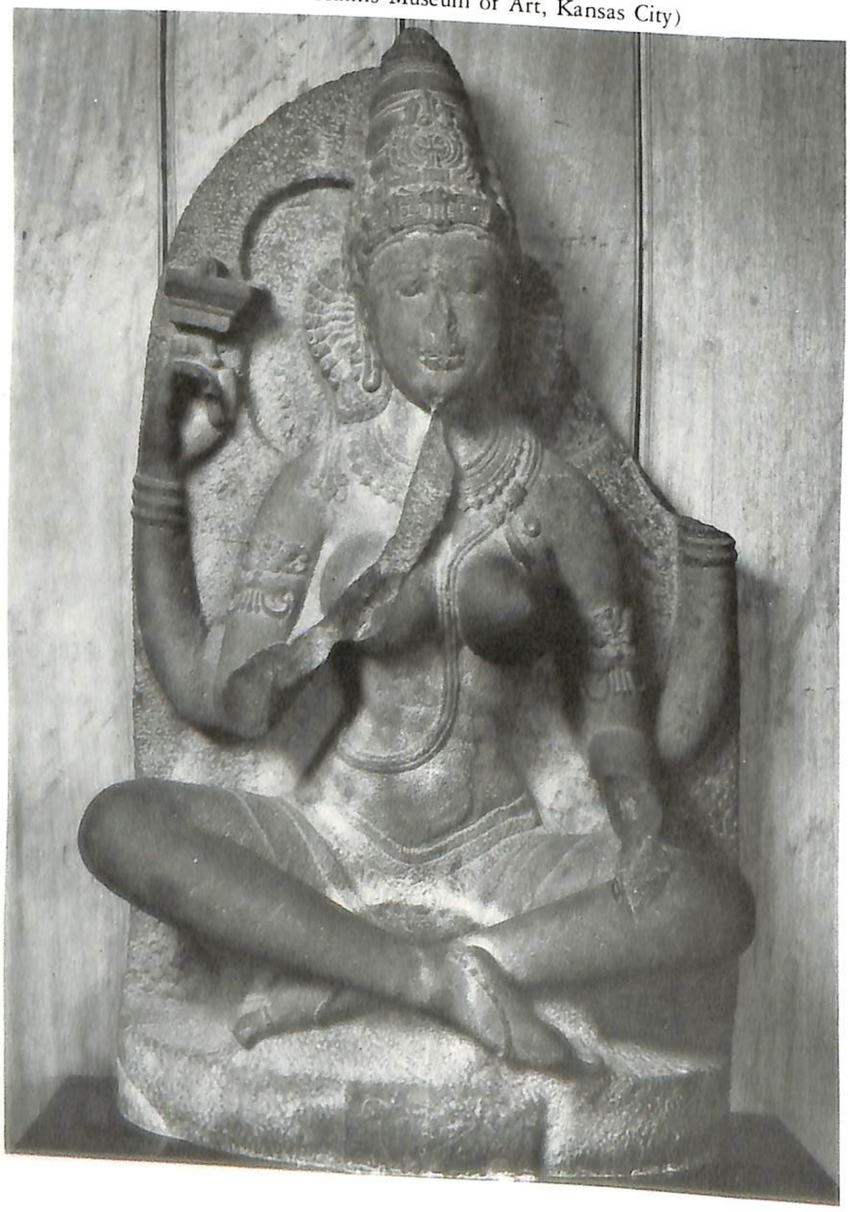
of a second hand apparently rested against her chin. The Madras Museum goddess of this series also has a bird *vāhana*, and she holds a *vajra* (thunderbolt) in one hand. Dates assigned to these Yoginīs vary widely, ranging from as early as the 9th century to as late as the 15th century.[7] The area of northern Tamilnadu from which they were recovered, was in the hands of the Pallava dynasty upto A.D. 900, at which time it became part of the Cola empire. The exact findspot of these images remains unknown, although some information may be contained in private correspondence said to exist between Jouveau-Dubreuil and the purchaser of the collection.[8] While it has been suggested that the images belong to Kancipuram, stylistically they seem to differ significantly from the distinctive sculptures belonging to that area.[9] It appears probable that the images are instead from Kaveripakkam, where a large tank yielded a great number of loose sculptures of a style akin to the goddesses in question, and apparently belonging to temples built in the vicinity of the tank. These temples apear to have been constructed by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa III, who was overlord of the entire Deccan by A.D. 965. He annexed the northern part of Tamilnadu to his empire, penetrated as far south as Ramesvaram and built temples in various parts of Tamilnadu.[10]

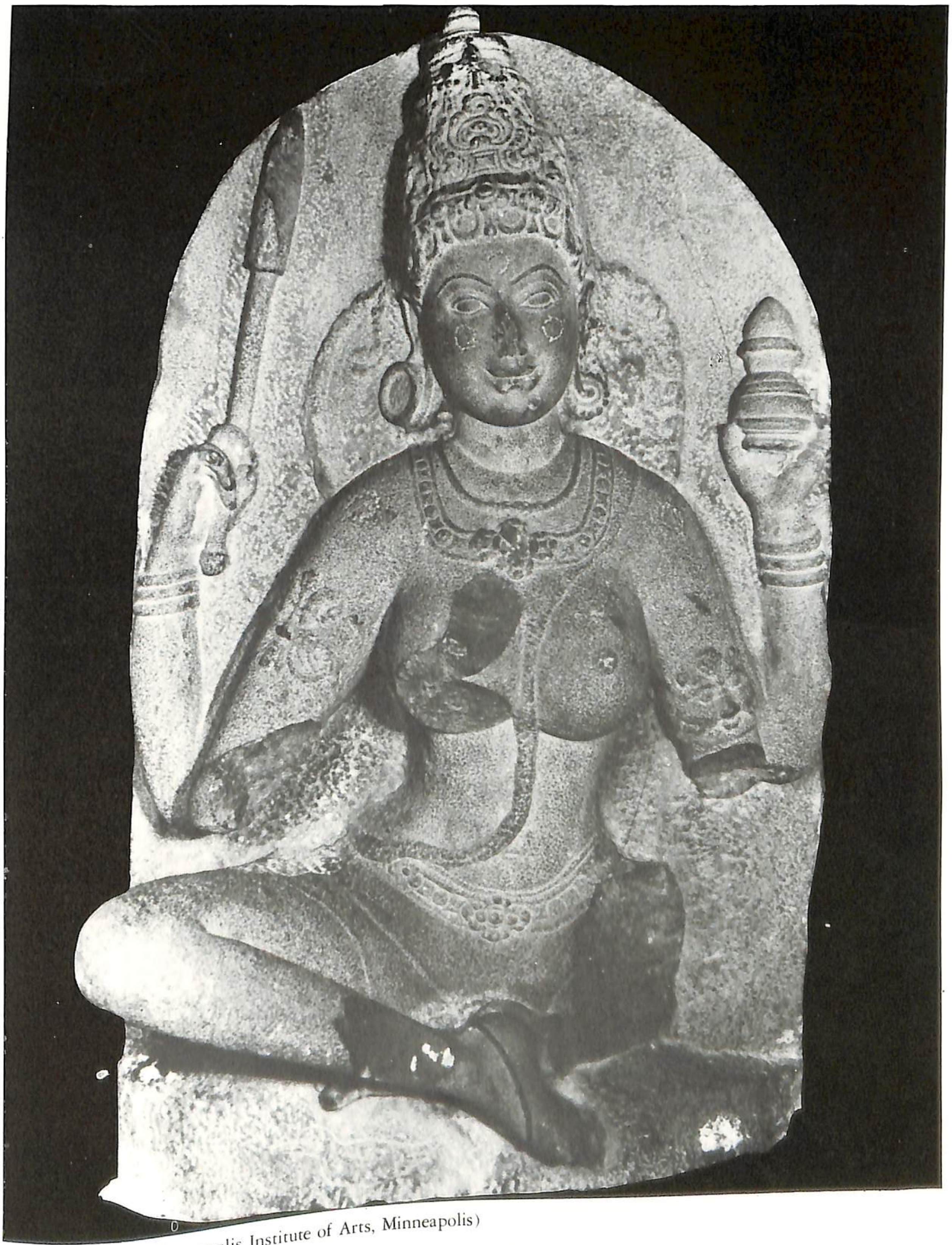
Sivaramamurti has earlier pointed out that the carvings from Kaveripakkam reveal a blending of certain northern features (like the lion-head armlet) with a basically southern style.[11] The carving of the goddesses in question reveals this admixture. The images of these Yoginīs were probably carved around the middle of the 10th century during the early Cola period. Their excellent workmanship and impressive size would indicate that they belonged to an imposing temple, possibly of the sixty-four Yoginīs. As we have noted the close association of the Yoginī cult and kings in central India during this period, it is not improbable that threatened by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, some local ruler of the Kaveripakkam region built a temple to the Yoginīs in order to regain his lost political power. It is also tempting to speculate on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch's association with the shrine, particularly in view of the fact that Somadevasuri's *Yaśastilaka,* with its graphic description of the



Yoginī (Courtesy: Government Museum, Madras)

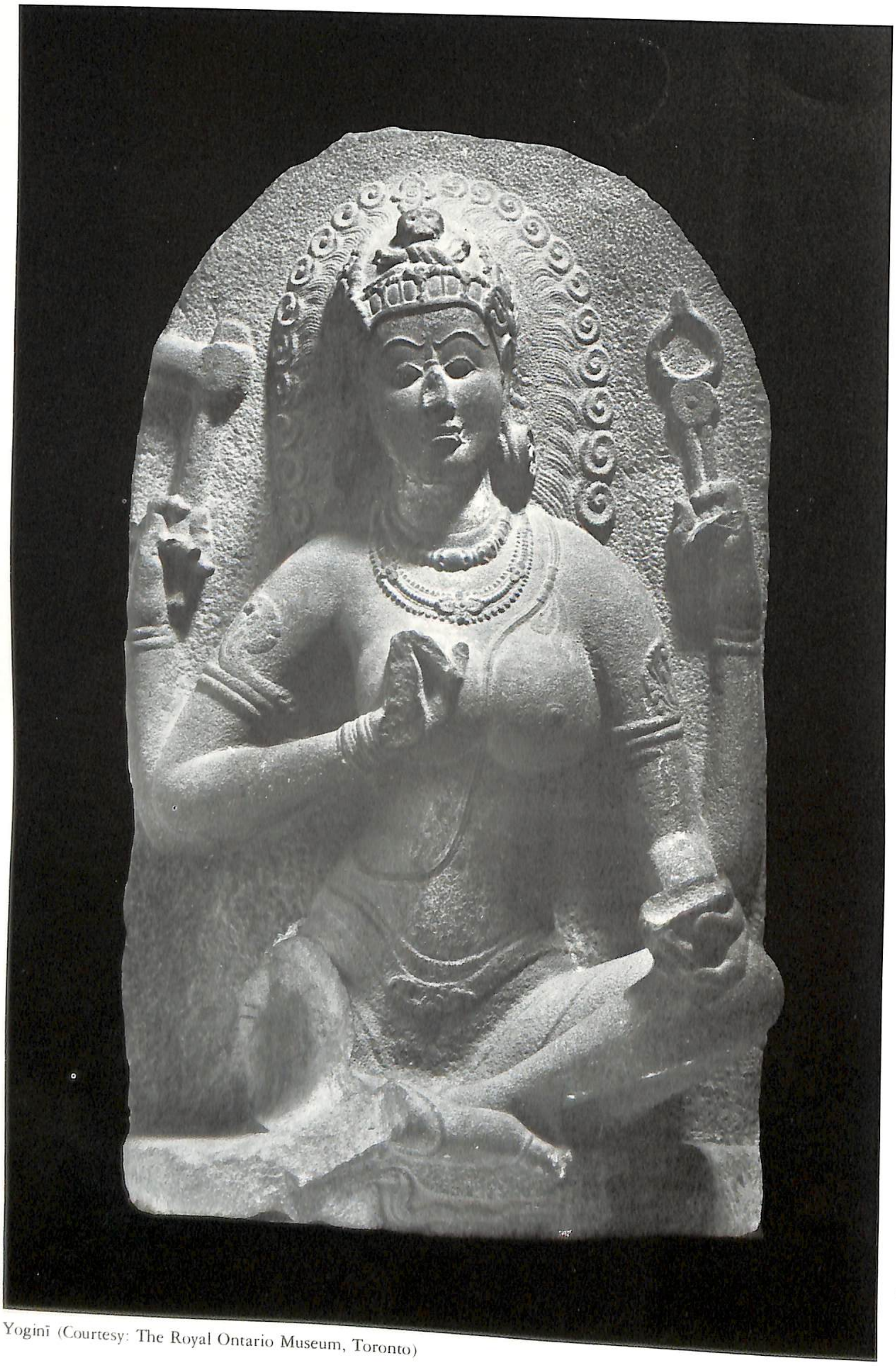
Yoginī (Courtesy: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City)





Yoginī (Courtesy: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis)

fearsome Mahayoginīs which we quoted in its entirety in the first chapter, was completed when, as the text itself states, king Kṛṣṇa III was camping in the south.[12] However, it must be pointed out that among the many surviving monuments of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the Deccan, none is dedicated to the Yoginīs, and thus any connection with the Rāṣṭrakūtas belongs to the region of pure speculation. However that may be, there seems little doubt that this group of southern Yoginīs may be assigned a date in the second half of the 10th century.



Yoginī (Courtesy: The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)

Conclusion

The tantric cult of the Yoginīs, one of the lesser-known sects of the form of heterodox worship referred to as Kaula Mārga, appears to have risen to considerable significance in the centuries following A.D. 600. Increasing numbers of followers were attracted to the cult, drawn presumably by the promise of the magical abilities that these goddesses would bestow on their favoured devotees. The orthodox tradition became increasingly aware of the power of this new religious order that was drawing away such large groups of worshippers. Realising that the Yoginīs possessed a certain persistent and magnetic appeal, it decided to incorporate these goddesses at least into the outer fringes of its own tradition. One method was to regard the Yoginīs as varying aspects of the Great Goddess of the Brahmanical tradition; it was suggested that Devī through these Yoginīs, manifested the totality of her power, presence and glory. Another method was to assign the Yoginīs a somewhat lesser status as deities attendant upon the Great Goddess. Either way, the assimilation seems to have been successful and the cult of the Yoginīs was admitted into the orthodox tradition as a facet of Śakti worship.

Worshippers of Śakti, for whom the Infinite is concentrated as Power in the person of the Great Goddess, address the Devī as *bhukti-mukti-pradāyinī*, giver of *bhukti* and *mukti*. She bestows on her devotees, here and now, *bhukti* or enjoyment of the things of this world; she also gives *mukti* or liberation in the hereafter. The Śāktas regard these two aspects as of parallel significance. They approach liberation in and through the joyous experience of this world *(bhukti)*, while according equal or higher place to *mukti* which the Great Goddess gives in due course. The Yoginī cult on the other hand raised to supreme importance the aspect of *bhukti*, giving a relatively insignificant position to *mukti*. In this pursuit of *bhukti*, it concentrated on the acquisition of magical powers through which alone one may achieve immediate success and fame in the worldly context. The Yoginīs of the Yoginī temple, placed in a circle around the image of Śiva, may perhaps be regarded as varying aspects of the Devī herself revolving around Śiva. Devī encircles Śiva; the triangle encloses the *bindu*; the *yoni* embraces the *liṅga*. If the goal be only worldly power and success, then instead of worshipping the Supreme Devī who gives both *bhukti* and *mukti*, it would appear that one could restrict oneself to the worship of this circle of Yoginīs. The Yoginī cult, ignoring as it does the quest for liberation, may be regarded as a restricted, in a sense even degenerate facet of Śakti worship.

Yoginī worship seems to have belonged to different categories and been practised at various levels. There were those who worshipped these goddesses in an abstract and symbolic form through *cakras* drawn on paper and cloth. This must also have been the earliest manner of Yoginī worship, prior to the construction of stone temples which arose at a later date as a result of royal patronage. At the other end of the scale were the initiates who enacted within the circle of the Yoginī temple all the ritual practices associated with the cult. These initiates drank wine and blood, sacrificed animals, practised the rites connected with the human corpse including the eating of its flesh, and probably also performed ritual copulation. Between these two levels—symbolic worhip through *cakras* and the literal enaction of temple rites—there must have been other group of followers who worshipped at the feet of the Yoginīs beseeching their grace and mercy, and adhering perhaps to one or other aspect of the ritual practices.

As the Yoginī cult began to break down in a period of increasing Muslim domination, it gradually lost its unity and coherence. However, elements that were part of the tantric worship of the Yoginīs (as indeed of the Great Goddess herself) persist to this day. The sacrifice of animals and the ritual offering of sacrificial blood still exists in parts of India, and is not necessarily restricted to tantric centres such as Kāmākhyā, Nepal or Orissa. In the heart of south India where for over a thousand years, Brahmanical traditions have prevailed, we find that goats are slaughtered and offered as appeasement to village goddesses, testifying to the deep-rooted belief in these practices and to the hold that these deities have over the people. In other parts of the country, the Yoginīs whose origin may partly be traced to the *grāma devatās,* appear to have reverted to their original village status. Cakra-Vaseli and Maheśvara-Vaseli are two Yoginīs named in an Orissan text which lists a group of sixty-four; today Vaseli is again a *grāma devatā* worshipped in most of the villages of coastal Orissa in the form of a vermillion-stained stone.

As a group of deities the sixty-four Yoginīs are still remembered and propitiated in certain parts of the country. In the Walkeshvar area of the city of Bombay, upto the first quarter of the present century, a yearly ritual (*vrata*) was performed by the womenfolk to secure the favour of the Yoginīs. A lingering belief in the power of these goddesses is apparent also in some laudatory verses written in the regional language, Marathi. Memories of the Yoginī cult linger also in Rajasthan where paper *cakras* of the sixty-four Yoginīs, frequently superimposed upon a painting of Devī, continued to be produced into the present century. In other parts of the country, the Yoginīs as a group are invoked even in present day worship. At the important tantric shrine of Devī Kāmākhyā in Assam, the routine daily *pūjā* of the Goddess includes the worship of the sixty-four Yoginīs with a repetition of their sixty-four names. While even in the orthodox south Indian tradition of Devī worship, token homage continues to be paid to the sixty-four Yoginīs, visualised as deities attendant upon Tripurasundarī, the Goddess Supreme.

Appendix I

Yoginīs including Mātṛkās

A study of the thirty or so lists of Yoginīs that I have so far been able to discover reveals that rarely do two lists correspond with one another, and one has to resign oneself to the existence of numerous traditions on the names of the sixty-four Yoginīs. I have divided these lists into two categories on the basis of whether they include or exclude the Mātṛkās. These categories prove to be meaningful, and it appears that the Mātṛkā-inclusive lists assign a very high status to the Yoginīs, while lists exluding Mātṛkās relegate the Yoginīs to a somewhat lower position.

The prime example of the Yoginīs being connected with the eight Mātṛkās is the *Agni Purāṇa* text which we have considered briefly in the first chapter. It derives the Yoginīs in groups from Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā and Mahālakṣmī, and states that they either belong to the same family *(kula)* as the Mātṛkā or that they were born *(sambhava)* from her. However, the *Agni Purāṇa* list of the 64 Yoginīs does not actually include the names of the Mātṛkās among its sixty-four names, while the lists considered here regard the Mothers as Yoginīs. A second series of Mātṛkās, visualised as sixteen in number, is a less prevalent though known concept. The names of these Mothers are entirely different from those of the better-known Mātṛkās of the Brāhmī series: they comprise Gaurī, Padmā, Śacī, Medhā, Sāvitrī, Vijayā, Jayā, Devasenā, Svadhā, Svāhā, Lokamātā, Śānti, Puṣṭi, Dhṛti, Tuṣṭi and Kuladevatā. We find that Yoginī lists that include the familiar Mātṛkās occasionally incorporate also seven or eight from this lesser-known series of sixteen.

We shall see that the Mātṛkā-inclusive tradition assigns to the Yoginīs an elevated status, considering them either as varying aspects of the Divine Female or as highly placed acolytes of the Goddess. The names of the Yoginīs are often those given to the Great Goddess herself, and important aspects of the Goddess such as the Navadurgās are occasionally included. This tradition also incorporates names of emanations of the Goddess as in the case of the Mātṛkās themselves, and of acolytes of a lesser status like the *dikpālikās*. Mātṛkā-inclusive inscribed images do not correspond with textual lists and it appears that there were several regional and independent traditions of such Yoginī groupings. The texts cannot, therefore, be of significant help in the identification of uninscribed Yoginī images.

Navadurgās as Yoginīs

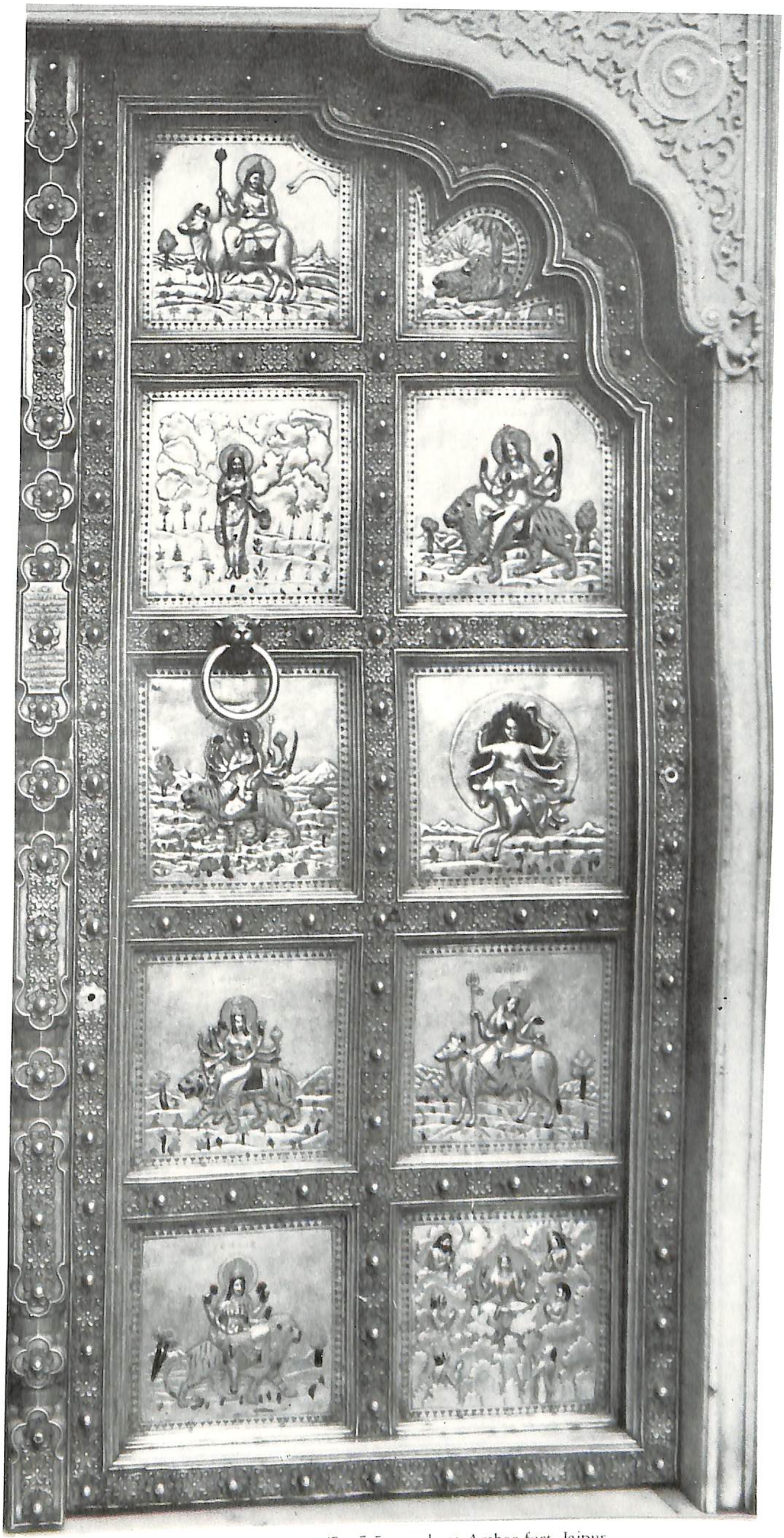
Durgā is perhaps the most important single aspect of Devī and Durgā herself is worshipped in nine varying forms as the Navadurgās. There are two textual versions of the Nine Durgās and both sets form part of the list of 64 Yoginīs contained in the *Kālikā Purāṇa.* One set of nine names is indicative of the more destructive aspect of Durgā's nature and each name contains the word *caṇḍā* meaning fierce or wrathful. The texts list Ugracaṇḍā, Pracaṇḍā Caṇḍogrā, Caṇḍanāyikā, Caṇḍā, Caṇḍavatī, Caṇḍarūpā, Aticaṇḍikā and Rudracaṇḍā. The *Kālikā* list of 64 Yoginīs contains six of these nine titles. The more popular version of the Navadurgās reads like a chronological listing of the major events in the life of Pārvatī. She is Śailaputrī (Daughter of the mountains), Brahmacāriṇī (Unmarried One, referring to her performance of penance to obtain Śiva as husband), Caṇḍaghaṇṭā, Kusmāṇḍā, Skandamātā (Mother of Skanda), Kātyāyanī (descriptive of the form in which she killed the buffalo-demon), Kālarātri, Mahāgaurī and Siddhidātrī (Giver of perfection). The *Kālikā* Yoginīs include seven of these nine forms, with only Brahmacāriṇī and Siddhidātrī being omitted.

Several other names belonging to the Goddess Supreme are also part of the *Kālikā* list. For instance Caṇḍikā, included here as a Yoginī, is the principal name given to Devī in the *Devīmāhātmya.* Among the Yoginīs are also Kālikā, Kauśikī, Ambikā Śākambharī, Bhīmā and Bhrāmarī; these are names with which Caṇḍikā identifies herself in that famous poem. The *Kālikā* list of 64 Yoginīs includes a number of Mātṛkās. Nine Mothers of the familiar Brāhmī series and seven from the alternate concept of sixteen, results in a total of 16 Mothers. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* clearly reflects a tradition in which the Yoginīs were not so much attendants of the Goddess as 64 varying aspects of Devī herself. The chapter that contains this list tells us that the 64 Yoginīs are to be worshipped individually *(yoginīstu catuṣaṣṭi pūjayet pṛthak pṛthak)*, this statement reinforcing their elevated status.

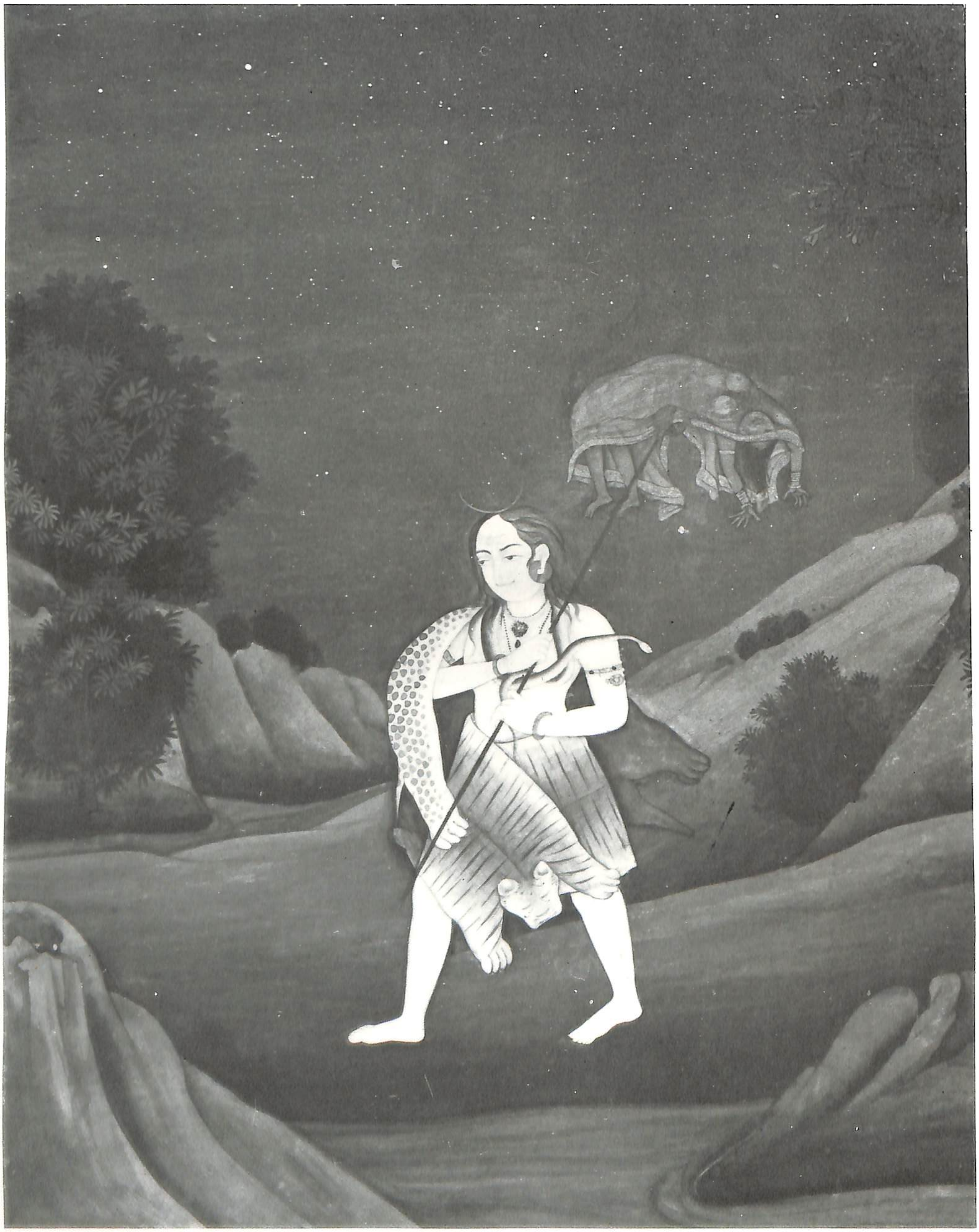
Two lists of the 64 Yoginīs closely akin to that of the *Kālikā Purāṇa* are found in texts on Durgā worship. One *nāmāvalī* is from the *Mahākālasamhitā* and the second is contained in an unpublished manuscript from the Midnapur district of West Bengal. The Midnapur text incorporates both sets of Nava—Durgās just as was seen in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* while the *Mahākālasamhitā* omits the Nava-Durgās of the *caṇḍā* variety. In both lists there is the same abundance of Mātṛkās encountered in the *Kālikā Purāṇa,* and both lists incorporate as Yoginīs, several names of Devī including Śākambharī, Bhīmā and Bhrāmarī.

Other Aspects of Devī

The *Skanda Purāṇa* list considered briefly in the first chapter includes several names of Devī herself and clearly regards the 64 Yoginīs as representing the totality of the power of the Great Goddess. This list does not contain a complete set of Mātṛkās, naming only Brāhmī and Cāmuṇḍā. Another list of this variety, including a complete set of Mātṛkās, is contained in the *Bṛhannandikeśvara Purāṇa,* and it includes as Yoginīs even Pārvatī



Navadurgās on the silver door of the Sheelā-mātā temple at Amber fort, Jaipur.



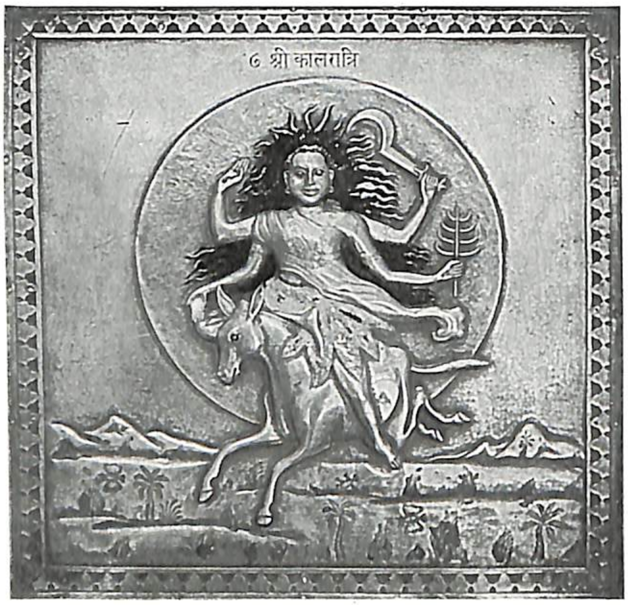
Śiva wanders the earth carrying Satī's body; detail of miniature (Courtesy: Los Angeles County Museum of Art) and Durgā. A third group of 64 Yoginīs inclusive of the Mātṛkās, in which too the names are indicative of the Yoginīs being aspects of Devī, comes from a manuscript entitled *Yoginī-mantra-yantrādi* in the Sarasvati Bhavan collection at Varanasi. Included in its list of 64 Yoginīs are Bhadrakālī, Lalitā, Ambikā, Gaurī, Bhadrā, Tripurā Sarasvatī Nārāyaṇī, Kālarātri, Dhūmāvatī, Kātyāyanī and Kuṇḍalinī. A paper *cakra* from Rajasthan gives us a visual version of this same list of names, with only minor variations in arrangement

Yet another list of the 64 Yoginīs which indicates that the Yoginīs were regarded as aspects of the Divine Female is recited as part of the daily *pūjā* at the important Devī temple of Kāmākhyā. Apart from the familiar Mātṛkās, this list incorporates also six names from the series of sixteen Mothers. The Kāmākhyā temple, situated on the hill overlooking the dramatic sweep of the Brahmaputra river, is one of the most important of Śakti *pīṭhas* or sites particularly sacred for the worship of the Female principle. There is an awe-inspiring, almost magical presence in certain beautiful lonely locations that no doubt was responsible for such places becoming Śakti *pīṭhas*. The concept of *pīṭha* is traditionally associated with the well-known myth of Śiva's destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice. We are told that Dakṣa once held a great sacrifice to which he did not invite his daughter Satī or her husband Śiva. Unable to bear this insult to her husband, Satī committed suicide. Hearing the tragic news, an infuriated Śiva hastened to the scene and destroyed the sacrifice. Then, inconsolable at the death of Satī, he wandered the earth dancing a frenzied dance of despair, all the while carrying Satī's body on his shoulder. The gods are said to have watched this for years, deciding finally that something must be done to cure Śiva of his madness. Accordingly, so the legend continues, Viṣṇu cut up Satī's body with his wheel. Each spot where a portion of Satī's body fell became a site of magical potency for Śakti worship.

Kamarupa where the *yoni* or generative organ of Satī fell is the place where the regenerative power of the Goddess is most important. There are ten Devī temples on the Kamarupa hill, of which the most important is that of Kāmākhyā. As is usual in Śakti *pīṭhas*, there is no image installed in the temple, and worship is offered at a spot where rests a stone forming part of the mountain itself. The Kāmākhyā shrine floor consists of a sheet of stone that slopes downwards from both sides, meeting in a *yoni*-like depression some ten inches deep. This hollow is constantly filled by water from an underground perrenial spring. It is this vulva-shaped depression that is worshipped as the goddess Kāmākhyā. Kāmākhyā is one of the few Devī temples at which the *pūjā* of the 64 Yoginīs with a repetition of their 64 names, is part of the routine daily worship. This list of Yoginīs, based on the *Devī Purāṇa's* sixty-four forms of Devī, clearly indicates that these Yoginīs are primarily aspects of the Great Goddess.

Dikpālikās as Yoginīs

The list of 64 Yoginīs given in the *Vidhi Prapā* of the Jain saint Śrī Jinaprabhasuri who lived between 1264-1334, includes not only the Mātṛkās but also the eight *śaktis* of the Dikpālas, the guardians of the eight directions. Commencing from the east and following in their correct sequence, Jinaprabhasuri's list gives us the *Dikpālikās* Indrāṇī, Āgneyī, Yāmyā, Nairutti, Varuṇī, Vāyavyā, Saumyā (for Kauberi) and Īśānī. His list includes also a series of names of Devī such as Kālikā, Harasiddhi, Umā, Nārāyaṇī, Bhadrā and Bhadrakālī. In addition, there are a few names of Yoginīs that indicate the fearsome and somewhat bizarre aspect of their character. These include Asthibhakṣī (Eater of Bones), Māmsapriyā (Lover of flesh), Mahādamṣṭrā (She with large teeth), Dīrghadamṣṭrā (She with long pointed teeth), Lamboṣṭī (Drooping-lipped One) and Vikaṭākṣī (Hideous-eyed One). Such names do not occur often in lists inclusive of Mātṛkās, but as we shall see in the course of Appendix II, this variety of names is quite common in lists that exclude those deities. Visual *cakras* containing the names of this series of Yoginīs also exist.



Kālarātri from Navadurgā doorway seen on page 189.

Shahdol's inscribed Yoginīs

A group of inscribed Yoginīs, some twenty-five in number, from the area of Shahdol in central India, belongs to the tradition that includes the *Dikpālikās* among its Yoginīs. Three Mātṛkās are present and in addition, we have three *śaktis* of *Dikpālas,* Śrī Vajrā (for Indrāṇī), Śrī Yamā and Śrī Varuṇī. The names of the Shahdol Yoginīs all appear to be of Sanskrit origin, but with more than half the images missing, we cannot be definitive on this score. Among the Yoginīs are Taralā (Glittering One), Ramaṇī (Lovely Young One), Tāraṇī (Saviour), Bhānavī (Lustrous One), Nainī (Nāginī, the snake goddess) and Jautī (corruption of Jayantī, the Victorious One). The resemblance to Jinaprabhasuri's list is limited to the inclusion of the *Dikpālikās,* as none of the other inscribed Shahdol names finds a place in his list.

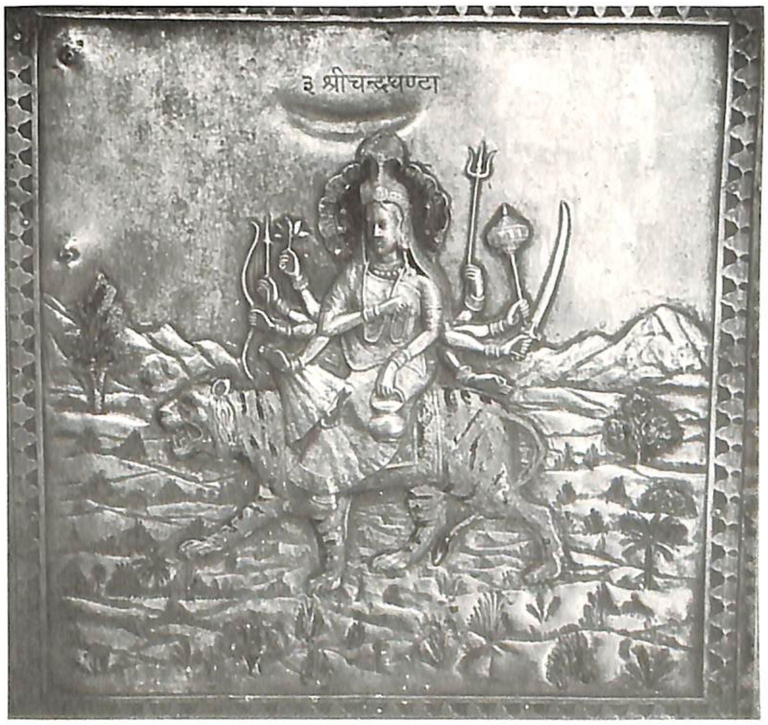
Orissa's *Caṇḍī Purāṇa* tradition

Saralā Dāsa's *Caṇḍī Purāṇa,* written in the 15th century when Oriya was an independent and developed language, contains a list of 64 Yoginīs. His list includes the Mātṛkās and contains a number of non-Sanskritic names of local Oriya origin. Among the Yoginīs is Vaseli, a deity unknown in the rest of India, but still worshipped in every Oriya village, with a vermillion-stained stone representing her presence. From Saralā Dāsa's list we are able to identify the following goddesses who have independent temples and continue to be worshipped today: Carcikā, Uttarāyaṇī, Nārāyaṇī, Bhagavatī, Samalayī, Ugratārā, Tāriṇī, Kutarī, Vārāhī, Dvāravāsinī, Gopālī and Mohinī. His Yoginī Hengulā is to this day the special family deity of the *rājā* of Talcher, while Bahuṭī is the Khallikote *rājā's iṣṭa-devatā.* This indicates that Saralā Dāsa's Yoginīs were regarded as highly placed deities, while his derivation of the Yoginīs from different parts of Devī's body, indicates that they are creations of, and perhaps aspects of, the Goddess. Saralā Dāsa's list of 64 Yoginīs clearly represents a specialised Oriya tradition of names.

Central Indian Tradition at Bheraghat and Gwalior

The names of the inscribed Yoginīs from Bheraghat are not contained in any known textual lists, and the group appears to represent an independent central Indian tradition. Apart from the Mātṛkās who are clearly identifiable by labels, a few names of Devī such as Śrī Kāmadā (a name of Devī in the *Kālikā Purāṇa)* and Śrī Sarvatomukhī (a name of Devī in the *Lalitā Sahasranāṃa)* are incorporated. Names that do not reveal any Sanskrit origin include Erudi, Pāravī, Teramvā, Takarī, Darddarā, and Thikinī. The majority of names, however, reveal a Sanskrit root even though several are not correct grammatically. This Ruṣinī probably comes from *ruṣa* or anger; Raṇjājirā may be a corruption of Raṇājitā (She who won the war); Thiracittā is probably Sthiracittā (She whose mind is steady); Audarā is perhaps from Udarā (Large-bellied One); Sandinī is probably a corruption of Caṇḍinī (Terrible One), and Ahkhalā may be a corruption of Akṣayā (Indestructible One). Accurate Sanskrit names include Bībhatsā (Dreadful One) Mandodarī (Small-bellied One), Pingalā (Tawny One), Ajitā (Unconquered One), Ānandā (Joyful One), Tapanī (Burning One), Haṁsinī (She with the swan), Uttalā (Formidable One), Lampaṭā (Lustful One) and Bhīṣaṇī (Terrifying One).

Another group of inscribed Yoginīs that reflect a local tradition is the incomplete series of about eighteen images from Naresar, among which are two clearly labelled Mātṛkās, Vaiṣṇavī and Indrāṇī. The Naresar group too is not part of any known textual tradition and it includes a few names of non-Sanskritic origin such as Nivau and Jampa.



Chandraghaṇṭā from Navadurgā doorway seen on page 189

Lists of Yoginīs Including Mātṛkās

1. *Kālikā Purāṇa,* ch. 63
2. *Durgā Pūjā;* Manuscript No. DH/345, Orissa State Museum
3. *Mahākālasamhitā,* as quoted in *Bṛhatpuraścaryārṇava, vol. 4, pp 106-107.*
4. *Skanda Purāṇa,* Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa, verses 54-61.
5. *Bṛhannandikeśvara Purāṇa,* as quoted in *Kulārṇavatantram* ed. with Bengali translation and commentaries by Upendrakumar Das (Navabharat Publishers, Calcutta, B.S. 1883). p 32.
6. *Yoginī-mantra-yantrādī,* Manuscript No. 7/107, 15610, Sarasvati Bhavan, Varanasi.
7. Sri Jinaprabhasuri's *Vidhi Prapā*
8. *Kāmākhyā pūjā*
9. Saralā Dāsa's *Caṇḍī Purāṇa,* Manuscript No. ORP 101, folia 201-202, Orissa State Museum
10. *ibid,* folio 196.
11. Bheraghat's Yoginī inscriptions
12. Saralā Dāsa's *Caṇḍī Purāṇa,* folio 199

List of Yoginīs

	1. Kālikā Purāṇa	***2. Durgā Pūjā DH/345***	***3. Mahākāla-Samhitā***
1.	Brahmāṇī	Brahmāṇī	Brahmāṇī
2.	Caṇḍikā	Caṇḍikā	Caṇḍikā
3.	Raudrī	Raudrī	Raudrī
4.	Gaurī	Gaurī	Gaurī
5.	Indrāṇī	Indrāṇī	Indrāṇī
6.	Kaumārī	Kaumārī	Kaumārī
7.	Vaiṣṇavī	Bhairavī	Bhairavī
8.	Durgā	Durgā	Durgā
9.	Nārasimhī	Nārasinghī	Narasimhī
10.	Kālikā	Kālikā	Kālikā
11.	Cāmuṇḍā	Cāmuṇḍā	Cāmuṇḍā
12.	Śivadūtī	Śivadūtī	Śivadūtī
13.	Vārāhī	Vārāhī	Vārāhī
14.	Kauśikī	Kauśikī	Kauśikī
15.	Māheśvarī	Maheśvarī	Maheśvarī
16.	Śaṅkarī	Śaṅkarī	Śaṅkarī
17.	Jayantī	Jayantī	Jayantī
18.	Sarvamaṅgalā	Sarvamaṅgalā	Sarvamaṅgalā
19.	Kālī	Kālī	Karālinī
20.	Kapālinī	Karālinī	Muktakeśī
21.	Medhā	Medhā	Śivā
22.	Śivā	Śivā	Śākambarī
23.	Śakāmbarī	Śākambarī	Bhīmā
24.	Bhīmā	Bhīmā	Śāntā
25.	Śāntā	Śāntā	Bhramarī
26.	Bhramarī	Bhramarī	Rudrāṇī
27.	Rudrāṇī	Rudrā	Caṇḍarūpiṇī
28.	Ambikā	Rudrāṇī	Kṣamā
29.	Kṣamā	Ambikā	Dhātri

30. Dhātri	Kṣamā	Svadhā
31. Svāhā	Dhātrī	Svāhā
32. Svadhā	Svāhā	Aparṇā
33. Parṇā	Svadhā	Mahodarī
34. Mahodarī	Mahādari	Ghorarūpā
35. Ghorarūpā	Ghorarūpā	Mahākālī
36. Mahākālī	Mahākālī	Vidyutjihvā
37. Bhadrakālī	Bhadrakālī	Kapālinī
38. Bhayaṅkarī	Kapālinī	Kṣemaṅkarī
39. Kṣemakarī	Kṣemaṅkarī	Mahāmāyā
40. Ugracaṇḍā	Ugracaṇḍā	Meghamālā
41. Caṇḍogrā	Caṇḍogrā	Bālakinī
42. Caṇḍanāyikā	Caṇḍanāyikā	Śuṣkodarī
43. Caṇḍā	Caṇḍā	Caṇḍaghaṇṭā
44. Caṇḍavatī	Caṇḍavatī	Mahāpretā
45. Caṇḍī	Caṇḍī	Priyaṅkarī
46. Mahāmohā	Mahāmayī	Kharatuṇḍī
47. Priyaṅkarī	Priyaṅkarī	Ṛkṣakarṇī
48. Balavikariṇī	Bālavikariṇī	Bālapramathanī
49. Balapramathanī	Bālapramandini	Manonmathanī
50. Madanonmathanī	Madanonmathanī	Sarvabhūtadamarī
51. Sarvabhūtadamanī	Sarvabhūtadamanī	Umā
52. Umā	Umā	Tārā
53. Tārā	Tārā	Mahānidrā
54. Mahānidrā	Mahānidrā	Vijayā
55. Vijayā	Vijayā	Jayā
56. Jayā	Jayā	Śailapurī
57. Śailaputrī	Śailaputrī	Mahālokā
58. Caṇḍaghaṇṭā	Caṇḍaghaṇṭā	Triśūlī
59. Skandamātā	Yoginī	Anjanaprabhā
60. Kālarātri	Kūsmāṇḍi	Kuṣmaṇḍā
61. Caṇḍikā	Skandamātā	Viśavasantrāsā
62. Kuṣmāṇḍī	Kātyāyanī	Kātyāyanī
63. Kātyāyanī	Kālarātrī	Kālarātri
64. Mahāgaurī	Mahāgaurī	Mahāgaurī

4. *Skanda Purāṇa* 7, 116

1. Mahālakṣmī
2. Kṣemaṅkarī
3. Śivadūtī
4. Mahābhadrā
5. Bhramarī
6. Candramaṇḍalā
7. Revatī
8. Harasiddhi
9. Durgā
10. Viṣamalocanā
11. Sahajā
12. Kulajā
13. Kubjā
14. Māyavī
15. Śāmbavī
16. Kriyā
17. Ādyā
18. Sarvagatā
19. Śuddhā
20. Bhavagamyā
21. Manotigā
22. Vidyā
23. Avidyā
24. Mahāmāyā
25. Suṣumṇā
26. Sarvamaṅgalā
27. Aunkārātmā
28. Mahādevī
29. Vedārthajananī
30. Śivā
31. Dīkṣā
32. Purāṇānvīkṣikī
33. Cāmuṇḍā
34. Śaṅkarapriyā
35. Brāhmī
36. Śāntikarī
37. Gaurī
38. Brhamāṇyā
39. Brāhmaṇapriyā
40. Bhadrā
41. Bhagavatī
42. Kṛṣṇā
43. Grahaṇā
44. Kṣatramālinī
45. Tripurā
46. Tvaritā
47. Nityā
48. Sankhyā
49. Kuṇḍalinī
50. Dhruvā
51. Kalyāṇī
52. Śobhanā
53. Nityā
54. Niṣkalā

55. Paramā
56. Kalā
57. Yoginī
58. Yogasadbhāvā
59. Yogagamyā
60. Gṛhāśayā
61. Kātyāyanī
62. Umā
63. Śarvā
64. Aparṇā

5. *Bṛhannandikeśvara Purāṇa*

1. Nārāyanī
2. Gaurī
3. Śākambharī
4. Bhīmā
5. Raktadantikā
6. Bhramarī
7. Pārvatī
8. Durgā
9. Kātyāyanī
10. Mahādevī
11. Caṇḍaghaṇṭā
12. Mahāvidyā
13. Mahātapā
14. Sāvitrī
15. Brahmavādinī
16. Bhadrakāli
17. Viśālākṣī
18. Rudrāṇī
19. Kṛṣṇapiṅgalā
20. Agnijvālā
21. Raudramukhī
22. Kālarātri
23. Tapasvinī
24. Meghasvanā
25. Sahasrākṣī
26. Viṣṇumāyā
27. Jalodarī
28. Mahodarī
29. Muktakeśī
30. Ghorarūpā
31. Mahābālā
32. Śruti
33. Smṛti
34. Dhṛti
35. Puṣṭi
36. Tuṣṭi
37. Medhā
38. Vidyā
39. Lakṣmī
40. Sarasvatī
41. Aparṇā
42. Ambikā
43. Yoginī
44. Ḍākinī
45. Śākinī
46. Hārinī
47. Hākinī
48. Lākinī
49. Tridaśeśvarī
50. Mahaṣaṣṭhī
51. Sarvamaṅgalā
52. Lajjā
53. Kauśikī
54. Brahmāṇī
55. Māheśvarī
56. Kaumārī
57. Vaiṣṇavī
58. Aindrī
59. Narasimhī
60. Varāhī
61. Cāmuṇḍā
62. Śivadūtī
63. Viṣṇumāyā
64. Mātṛkā

6. *S.B.* 7/107-25610

1. Brahmāṇī
2. Kumārī
3. Varāhī
4. Śankarī
5. Indrāṇī
6. Kankālī
7. Karālī
8. Kālī
9. Mahākālī
10. Cāmuṇḍā
11. Jvālāmukhī
12. Kāmākhyā
13. Kapālinī
14. Bhadrakālī
15. Durgā
16. Ambikā
17. Lalitā
18. Gaurī
19. Sumaṅgalā
20. Rohiṇī
21. Kapilā
22. Śūlakarā
23. Kuṇḍalinī
24. Tripurā
25. Kurukullā
26. Bhairavī
27. Bhadrā
28. Candrāvalī
29. Narasimhī
30. Nirañjanā
31. Hemakānti
32. Pretāsanā
33. Īśānī
34. Vaiśvānarī
35. Vaiṣṇavī
36. Vināyakī
37. Yamaghaṇṭā
38. Harasiddhī
39. Sarasvatī
40. Totilā
41. Vandī
42. Śankinī
43. Padminī
44. Chitriṇī
45. Varuṇī
46. Nārāyaṇī
47. Vanadevī
48. Yamabhaginī
49. Sūryaputrī
50. Suśītalā
51. Kṛuhṇā
52. Varāhī
53. Raktā
54. Kālarātri
55. Ākāśi
56. Śreṣṭinī
57. Jayāvijayā
58. Dhūmāvatī
59. Vagīśvarī
60. Kātyāyanī
61. Agnihotrī
62. Vajreśvarī
63. Mahāvidyā
64. Īśvarī

7. *Devī Purāṇa*

1. Vijayā
2. Maṅgalā
3. Rudrā
4. Dhṛti
5. Śāntī
6. Śivā
7. Kṣamā
8. Siddhi
9. Tupti
10. Umā
11. Puṣṭi
12. Śrī
13. Siddhi
14. Rati
15. Diptā
16. Kānti
17. Yaṣ́ā
18. Lakṣmī
19. Īśvarī
20. Vṛiddhi
21. Śakti
22. Jayavatī
23. Brāhmī
24. Jayantī
25. Aparājitā
26. Ajitā
27. Mānasī
28. Kheṭā
29. Diti
30. Māyā
31. Mahāmāyā
32. Kriyā
33. Arundhatī
34. Ghaṇṭā
35. Karṇā
36. Sarpabhūṣaṇiraudrā
37. Kālinī
38. Mayurī
39. Raudrī
40. Mohanī
41. Ratilālasā
42. Vimalā
43. Gaurī
44. Śaraṇyā
45. Kaśiki
46. Mati
47. Durgā
48. Surupā
49. Śivarūpiṇī
50. Ripuhā
51. Ambikā
52. Carcikā
53. Surapūjitā
54. Vaivāsvati
55. Kaumarī
56. Mahesvārī
57. Vaiṣṇavī
58. Mahālaksmī
59. Kārtikī
60. Kauśikī
61. Śivadūtī
62. Śivā
63. Cāmuṇḍā
64. Karṇikā

8. Sri Jinaprabhasuri's *Vidhi-Prapā*

1. Varāhī
2. Vāmanī
3. Garuḍī
4. Indrāṇī
5. Āgneyī
6. Yāmyā
7. Naiṛutti
8. Varuṇi
9. Vāyavyā
10. Saumyā
11. Iśānī
12. Brāhmī
13. Vaiṣṇavī
14. Maheśvarī
15. Vināyakī
16. Śivā
17. Śivadūtī
18. Cāmuṇḍā
19. Jayā
20. Vijayā
21. Ajitā
22. Aparājitā
23. Harasiddhi
24. Kālikā
25. Caṇḍā
26. Sucaṇḍā
27. Kanakanandā
28. Sunandā
29. Umā
30. Ghaṇṭā
31. Sughaṇṭā
32. Māmsapriyā
33. Āśāpūrā
34. Lohitā
35. Ambā
36. Astibhakṣī
37. Nārāyaṇī
38. Narasimhī
39. Kaumārī
40. Vāmaratā
41. Aṅgā
42. Vaṅgā
43. Dīrghadamṣṭrā
44. Mahādamṣṭrā
45. Prabhā
46. Suprabhā
47. Lambā
48. Lamboṣṭī
49. Bhadrā
50. Subhadrā
51. Kālī
52. Raudrī
53. Raudramukhī
54. Karālī
55. Vikarālī
56. Sākṣ́ī
57. Vikaṭākṣī
58. Tārā
59. Sutārā
60. Rajanikarā
61. Ranjani
62. Śvetā
63. Bhadrakālī
64. Kṣamākarī

9. Saralā Dāsa's *Caṇḍi purāṇa* ORP 101 folia 201-202.

1. Chāyā
2. Māyā
3. Nārāyaṇī
4. Brahmāyaṇī
5. Rudrāyaṇī
6. Indrāyaṇī
7. Bhiravī
8. Cakra-Vāseli
9. Maheśvara-Vāseli
10. Ugratārā
11. Carcikā
12. Ambikā

13. Kutāri-Bhagavatī
14. Kamalā
15. Śānti
16. Kānti
17. Mādhavī
18. Cāmuṇḍā
19. Vimalā
20. Caceśvarī
21. Ānandadāyī
22. Varāhī
23. Surūpā
24. Virūpā
25. Khecarī
26. Bhūcarī
27. Kankālī
28. Vetālī
29. Bhadrakālī
30. Rohiṇikeśvarī
31. Kāmākhī
32. Ullukā
33. Ullotā
34. Samudra-tāriṇī
35. Anuchāyā
36. Gopālī
37. Vanadevatā
38. Mohinī
39. Kāmaśreṇi
40. Sudharmiṇī
41. Sandhāyi
42. Bandhāyi
43. Kāmabhadrā
44. Kāminī
45. Ambikā
46. Bhadrāyaṇī
47. Kapālī
48. Bhāskarī
49. Candrāyaṇī
50. Śāmabhadrā
51. Triloka-mohini
52. Ḍākeśvarī
53. Pingaleśvari
54. Śarvānginī
55. Sureśvarī
56. Kuttārī
57. Poelālī
58. Bhagavatī
59. Sarasvatī
60. Hengulā
61. Cańcalāyī
62. Virajā
63. Surekhā
64. Tripurā
65. Śrī Vandini (Vancani)
66. Śrī Darppahāri
67. m
68. il
69. Śrī Jāhā
70. Śrī Thīkkini
71. Śrī Ghantāli
72. Śrī Darddari
73. m
74. Śrī Vaiṣṇavī
75. Śrī Bhīṣaṇī
76. Śrī Śatanusarnvarā
77. Śrī Kṣatradharmiṇī
78. d
79. Śrī Phaṇendrī
80. Śrī Vīrendrī
81. Śrī Thā (Yā) kini

10. Bheraghat Inscribed Images

1. m
2. Śrī Simhasimhā
3. Śrī Ruṣini
4. Śrī Kāmadā
5. Śrī Raṇājirā
6. Śrī Antakāri
7. d
8. Śrī Erudi
9. Śrī Nandinī
10. Śrī Bībhatsā
11. Śrī Varāhī
12. Śrī Mandodarī
13. Śrī Sarvvatomukhī
14. Śrī Thirachittā
15. Śrī Khemukhī
16. Śrī Jāmbavī
17. d
18. Śrī Audarā
19. d
20. Śrī Yamunā
21. d
22. m
23. Śrī Pāravi
24. Śrī Nīladamvarā
25. m
26. Śrī Teramvā
27. Śrī Sandinī
28. Śrī Pińgalā
29. Śrī Ahkhalā
30. m
31. m
32. Śrī Māyavardhani
33. d
34. Śrī Biḍālidevī

2nd entrance

35. m
36. Śrī Gaṇeśah (not original placing)
37. Śrī Chatrasamvarā
38. Śrī Ajitā
39. Śrī Caṇḍikā
40. Śrī Ānandā
41. Śrī Ainginī
42. Śrī Brahmāṇī
43. Śrī Māheśvarī
44. Sri Takārī
45. Śrī Tapanī
46. Śrī Padmahastā
47. Śrī Hamsinī
48. d
49. d
50. Śrī Īśvarī
51. Śrī Thāni
52. Śrī Indrajālī
53. Śrī Gahanī
54. d
55. Śrī Indrāṇī
56. Śrī Janghinī

57. Śrī Uttalā
58. Śrī Nālinī
59. Śrī Lampaṭā
60. Śrī Dardduri̅

61. Śrī Ṛkṣamātā
62. Śrī Gāndhārī
63 .Śrī Jāhnavī
64. Śrī Ḍākinī

11. Saralā Dāsa's *Caṇḍī Purāṇa*

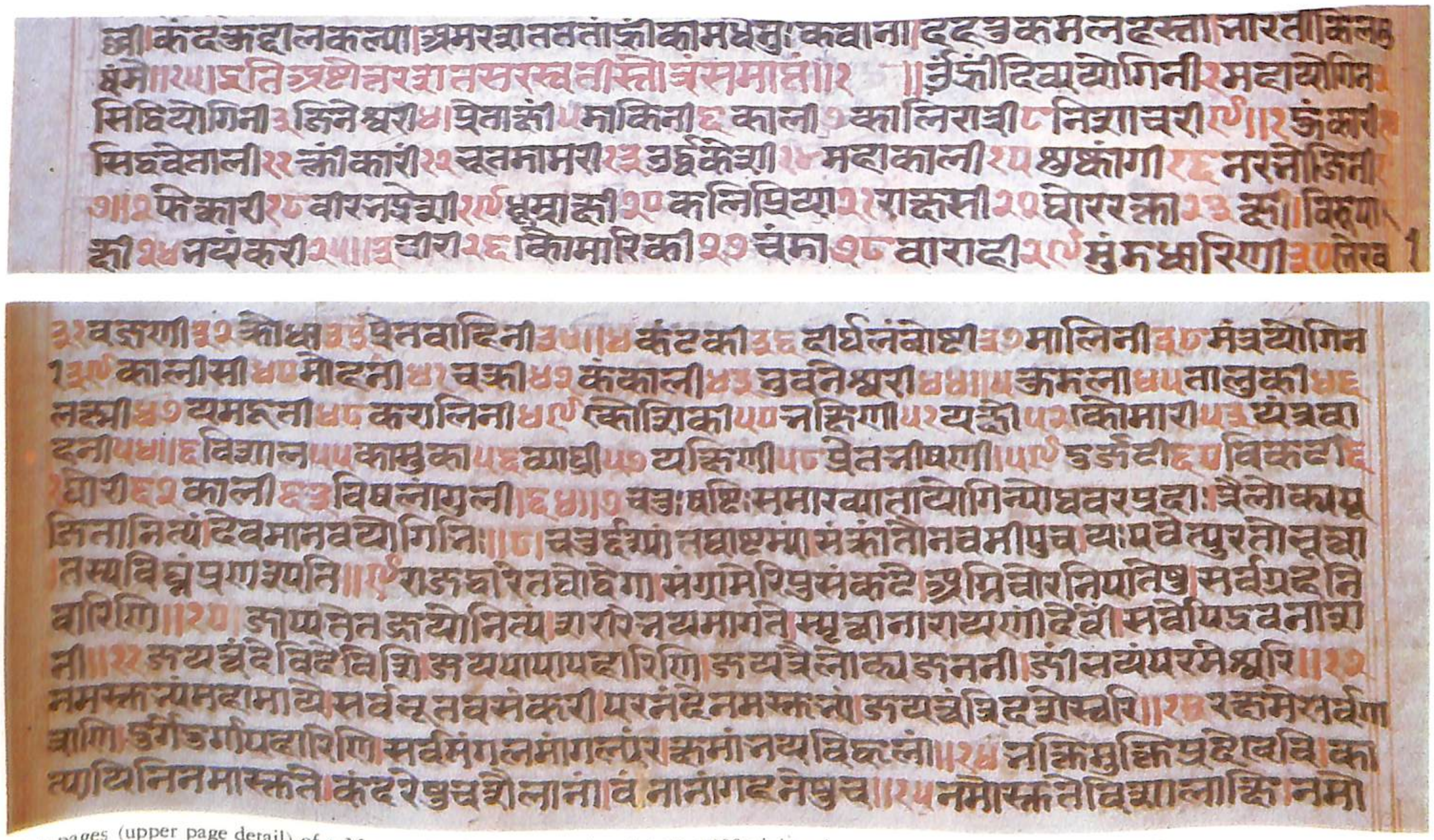
1. Nārāyaṇi	from sweat of Devī
2. Vāseli	from her heart
3. Brahmāyaṇi	from her breath
4. Indrāyaṇi	fist
5. Ḍākeśvarī	voice
6. Rudrāyaṇī	navel
7. Candrakānti	right ear
8. Yogeśvarī	fear
9. Nīlā	cheek
10. Kalā	
11. Śruti	
12. Śānti	
13. Maheśvarī	
14. Aparṇā	
15. Mekhalā	
16. Tripuramohinī	left ear
17. Śivā	forehead
18. Kātyāyanī	forehead
19. Bhadrakālī	left arm
20. Vikarālī	womb
21. Vakracaṇḍī	womb
22. Carcikā	right arm
23. Kankati	fingers
24. Ugratārā	fearsome glow
25. Tāriṇī	toe nails
26. Chāyā	neck
27. Māyā	neck
28. Hengulā	anger
29. Bhadrakālī	anger
30. Sandhāyī	lip
31. Bandhāyī	lip
32. Mātaṅgī	legs
33. Varāhī	legs
34. Kapālī	left side
35. Kāmaśenā	left arm

The list is left incomplete with the comments that it was in this way that the entire group of 64 Yoginīs were formed.

12. Saralā Dāsa's List of Vāhanas for Yoginīs

Brahmāyaṇī	Swan
Nārāyānī	garuḍa
Indrayāṇī	elephant
Rudrāyanī	bull
Bhairavī	sampātī (Garuḍa's brother)
Bhadrakālī	tiger
Carcikā	corpse
Ugratārā	boar; cat

Aparṇā	lion
Virajā	scorpion
Cāmuṇḍā	owl, swan
Kankālī	peacock
Muratī	camel
Mātaṅgī	donkey
Mahāmāyā	deer; elephant
Varāhī	black dog
Chāyā	antelope
Bahuti	boar
Vikarālī	jackal
Candrakānti	sheep
Vimalā	lion
Kṛtāntaka-Caṇḍī	cat
Kāmākkhī	cock; bullock-cart
Vetālī	bulldog; palanquin
Kapālī	leopard
Cañcalā	buffalo
Tripurā	antelope
Virupā	owl
Hengulā	leopard
Kātyāyanī	tiger
Abhayā	scorpion
Ghaṭavari	lion
Kānti	goat



Two pages (upper page detail) of a Manuscript from Jaipur, dated A.D. 1500 giving the names of the sixty-four Yoginīs

Appendix II

Two major Yoginī traditions excluding Mātṛkās

A comparison and analysis of the various textual listings of the 64 Yoginīs that exclude the Mātṛkās, indicates that this tradition thought of the Yoginīs as a class of subsidiary deities who were associated with the Goddess as her attendants or at best, as her companions. They do not seem to have the same elevated divine status as the series of Yoginīs including Mātṛkās. This tradition regarded the Yoginīs and Mātṛkās as belonging to different categories and it kept them in separate and independent compartments. The names of the Yoginīs are often indicative of the more fearsome aspect of their character. Such names include Bhayaṅkarī (Fearsome One), Mahākrūrā (Extremely Cruel), Bhayānanā (Fearsome-faced One), Kalahapriyā (Fond of quarrels), Ghora-Raktākṣī (Hideously Blood-eyed One), Muṇḍadhāriṇī (Carrying a severed human head). Narabhojinī (Eater of men), Pretavāhinī (She who rides a corpse), Pretabhūṣinī (Adorned with corpses) and Yamadūtī (Messenger of Yama, god of death). The prevalence of this concept of the fearsome Yoginīs is reflected in a prayer contained in a tantric text that beseeches all the Yoginīs of fearsome forms to be benevolent towards the devotee.[1]

A study of the many varying textual versions of the 64 Yoginīs that exclude the Mātṛkās, as also a consideration of visual representations of *cakras* on cloth and paper, reveals the existence of two main traditions of these 64 Yoginīs. We find two sets of names that are repeated frequently. One list commences with the names Akṣobhyā-Ṛkṣakarṇī-Rākṣasī, and we shall refer to these Yoginīs as belonging to Group A. The other listing starts with the names Divyayogī-Siddhayogī-Mahayogī, and will be referred to as Group B. In addition, there are a couple of individual name groupings excluding the Mātṛkās, which we shall consider in conclusion.

Group A Yoginīs

The Group A tradition of Yoginīs is detailed in at least four different texts that vary in date from the 9th to the 13th centuries. The earliest text is the *Agni Purāṇa* which presents us this list of names in two different chapters. In its 52nd chapter, the list stands on its own, with instructions that we should commence from the east. Names that are given to Devī are conspicuously absent, and there are neither Mātṛkās nor Dikpālikās. The text states that all the Yoginīs have either eight or four arms and that they carry a variety of weapons. In its 146th chapter, the *Agni Purāṇa* presents us with the same list of Yoginīs, except that they are here assigned in groups to the family of one of the eight Mātṛkās. As we have earlier pointed out, this list of 64 Yoginīs does not, however, include these Mātṛkās who were clearly considered to belong to a category apart.

An Akṣobhyā-Ṛkṣakarṇī-Rākṣāsī list in 64 verses is contained in the *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* of Hemadri (13th century), who tells us that this list is from the earlier *Mayadīpikā* which appears to be a lost text. Each of the 64 verses is devoted to the glorification and description of one Yoginī, and there is no allusion at all to the Mātṛkās. Until the present study, Hemadri's list was the only known text that described the Yoginīs and assigned a mount to each.

I am introducing here two new lists of the Group A Yoginīs, both lists including descriptions of the Yoginīs and both from manuscripts in the Nepal National Archives. The *Pratiṣṭhā-Lakṣaṇa-Sāra-Samuccaya* (henceforth *PLSS)* which belongs to the 13th century[2] gives us an Akṣobhyā-Ṛkṣakarṇī-Rākṣasī list. The text first lists the 64 names and then proceeds, in 64 verses, to describe each Yoginī. It also assigns the Yoginīs in groups of eight to the eight directions. The Nepali manuscripts of the *Śrī Matottara Tantra* which belong at the very latest to the 13th century,[3] once again testify to the popularity of this Group A tradition of the 64 Yoginīs. Its 20th chapter gives details of a circular formation called the Khecarī Cakra in which this group of 64 Yoginīs is described, with the colour and mount of each Yoginī. There is no reference in either of these texts to the Mātṛkās.

The three descriptive texts we now possess of the Group A Yoginīs, reveal a minor variation in the names of the 64, but on the whole the names tally remarkably well. However, the descriptions of the Yoginīs as well as the mounts assigned to each, vary slightly and, on occasion, differ widely. Hemadri visualizes Raktākṣī on a horse while *PLSS* places her on a sheep. Hemadri assigns a dog as mount for Lolā, *PLSS* places her on a bird and the *Matottara* more specifically on an owl. Hemadri's Līlā rides a peacock, while in the *PLSS* she rides a bear and in the *Matottara,* a leopard. A Yoginī named Ṛgvedā sits upon a lotus in the *PLSS* and upon a heron in the *Matottara,* but she is omitted altogether by Hemadri. Hemadri's Akṣobhyā rides on an elephant and while the *PLSS* agrees, the *Matottara* tells us that her mount is a *makara.* Hemadri's Hunkārī is fish-faced and is seated on a fish; while *PLSS* agrees, the *Matottara* informs us that Hunkārī rides a *garuḍa.* On the whole, we find that but for occasional differences, Hemadri and *PLSS* are more or less in agreement in their descriptions of the Yoginīs.

When we turn to the inscribed Yoginī images, we find, however, that they do not correspond with any of these various textual prescriptions. The Yoginī Taralā is placed by Hemadri on an alligator and by *PLSS* on a *makara* (the *Matottara* omits the name); but the sculpted inscribed Taralā from Shahdol has a *garuḍa* mount. Tapanī is placed by Hemadri and *PLSS* upon a snake (the *Matottara* omits her too); but the labelled image of Tapanī at Bheraghat has a horse as her *vāhana.* The Yoginī Lampaṭā is carved at Bheraghat with a reclining male as her mount; the *Matottara* alone mentions her and gives her an elephant *vāhana.* Once again, we find that the texts cannot help us when it comes to the identification of uninscribed Yoginī images.

It has been stressed that list of 64 Yoginīs of the Group A tradition do not include the names of the Mātṛkās, and that even the *Agni Purāṇa* which derives these Yoginīs in groups from the eight Mātṛkās, does not include the names of the Mātṛkās in its list of the 64 Yoginīs. There is, however, one significant exception. We have seen that the unique *Matottara* listing of 81 Yoginīs revolves around a concept of nine Mātṛkās, each considered to be a Yoginī herself, and encircled by eight other Yoginīs to form nine groups of nine Yoginīs each. An examination of the names of these 81 Yoginīs indicates that it is, in fact, an expanded Group A list. This is the only instance of a Group A listing incorporating Mātṛkās.

The Group A list of the 64 Yoginīs appears to have been the one best known to the orthodox tradition and apparently accepted by them. Apart from the fact that it is incorporated in the *Agni Purāṇa* it is the group mentioned by later writers including Bhaskararaya in his commentary on the *Lalitā Sahasranāma.*[4] The group is also referred to in the *Kulārṇava Tantra* as Akṣobhyādi[5] (Akṣobhyā and the others), indicating that this was one of the most prevalent sets of names for the Yoginīs.

Group B Yoginīs

The second major tradition of 64 Yoginīs, that of Group B, commences with the names Divyayogī-Siddhayogī-Mahāyogī, and it consists even more than Group A, of names indicating the wrathful and cruel nature of the Yoginīs. It excludes Mātṛkās and Dikpālikās, while names given to Devī are, of course, absent. The Group B tradition is contained in five unpublished manuscripts from various parts of India, in three paper and cloth *cakras* from Rajasthan and in some five other miscellaneous sources. None of these lists contain descriptions of the Yoginīs or give any indication regarding their mounts. The earliest indisputable textual date assignable to Group B is A.D. 1501, contained in a manuscript from Jaipur, which lists these Yoginīs. We have no way, however, of determining when this tradition first arose. Of the three paper *cakras* which give these names, two are in the form of a circle with 64 sopkes, each containing the name of a Yoginī. The third is a formation of 64 squares that is superimposed against an image of Devī. The numbering of 1 to 64 within this square is unusual and its significance may have some possible connection with the 64 squares of the ground plan of a temple, the Vāstu Puruṣa Maṇḍala.

A Group B list of Yoginīs is contained in a brief two-folia manuscript labelled *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-nāmāvalī* in the Sarasvati Bhavan collection of the Sanskrit University at Varanasi. Another version of this same group of Yoginīs comes from a manuscript entitled *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjan* in the collection of the Central Library at Baroda. A slight variation on tradition B is to be found in three listings of 64 Yoginīs that commence with the names Jayā-Vijayā-Gaṇeśvarī. A palm-leaf manuscript in the Telugu script from the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library at Madras, entitled *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā,* lists these Yoginīs in sets of eight, giving each group a colour and specifying the objects held in their hands. A manuscript from the Sarasvati Bhavan at Varanasi, labelled *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā-vidhi,* group them into similar sets of eight although it does not mention any direction for each group. However, colours and objects held in the hands are specified. The third list of this group comes from the tantric text, *Kubjikāpūjāpaddhati.* Essentially, these are groupings of the same Group B Yoginīs and include also the names Siddhayogī, Mahāyogī and Divyayogī.

The Yoginīs of Group B form part of the *Śrī Tattva Nidhi* put together by the Mahārājā of Mysore in the late 19th century. His document is a compilation from various ancient sources and it is suggested that this particular list of Yoginīs was taken from the *Rudra Yāmala.*[6] This same list, as an anonymous hymn, is contained as an appendix to Jhavery's essay on *mantra,* which is a study of the Jain tantra *Bhiarava Padmāvatī Kalpa.*[7] While it is implied that the list was once accepted in the Jain tradition, this is not explicitly stated. As anonymous lists, Group B *nāmāvalis* are included in Agrawala's book of folk cults and in Nahta's article on Yoginī listings.[8]

Other Yoginī listings excluding Mātṛkās

There exist a few other lists of Yoginīs that do not belong to either Group A or B and also exclude the Mātṛkās. One such example is the Kāṣī Khaṇḍa list of the *Skanda Purāṇa* in which the Yoginīs either have bird and animal heads, or alternatively, are fierce in character. Their names are clearly descriptive and include, to name just a few, Mārjārī (cat), Krauñcī (heron), Kapotikā (dove), Ulūkikā (owl), Śukī (parrot), Śyenī (hawk), Kākatuṇḍikā (crow-beaked), Simhamukhī (Lion-faced), Gajānanā (elephant-headed), Vānarānanā (monkey-faced), Mṛgaśīrsā (deer-headed), Śvadamṣṭrā (canine-toothed) and Vikaṭānanā (fearsome-faced). A second list of Yoginīs excluding Mātṛkās is found in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and in a manuscript in the Baroda collection, the *Śāradātilaka Tantra.* However, unlike Groups A and B, these names are generally indicative of divinity and include some of the Yoginīs of the famous Śrī Cakra such as Anangamadanā, Anangamekhalā and Anangakusumā. While the various configurations of the Śrī Cakra are presided over by "Yoginīs", these Śrī Cakra Yoginīs, as we have seen, are conceptually different from the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples and they stand distinctly apart. Their inclusion here suggests that the *Śāradātilaka* list is a late compilation which collected and amalgamated names from varying traditions.

Yoginī Lists Excluding Mātṛkās

Yoginīs of Group A

13. *Agni Purāṇa,* chapter 52
14. Hemadri's *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi,* Virata Khaṇda, chapter 1
15. *Pratiṣṭhā Lakṣaṇa Sāra Samuccaya,* chapter 7, verses 327-400
16. *Srī Matottara Tantra,* chapter 20
17. *Agni Purāṇa,* chapter 146

Yoginīs of Group B

18. Jaipur manuscript dated A.D. 1501
19. *Catusaṣṭi-yoginī-nāmāvalī,* Manuscript No. 2/150, 62505 Sarasvati Bhavan, Varanasi
20. *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjan,* Manuscript No. 8177, Baroda
21. Square formation of Yoginīs from Rajasthan painting
22. *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā,* Manuscript No. D. 14662, Madras
23. *Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā-vidhi,* Manuscript No. 28/179, Sarasvati Bhavan, Varanasi
24. *Kubjikāpūjāpaddhati,* as quoted in Gopinath Kaviraj, *Tāntrika Sāhitya,* p. 135.
25. *Śrī Tattvanidhi*

Other groupings excluding Mātṛkās

26. *Skanda Purāṇa,* Kāśī Khaṇḍa, chapter 45, verses 33-52
27. *Śāradātilaka Tantra,* chapter 7, verses 35-43; *Devī Bhāgavatā Purāṇa,* book 12, chapter 11, verses 6-14; *Bhūtalipi Mātṛkā Pūjā Vidhi,* Manuscript 118 24, Baroda.

Yoginīs of Group A

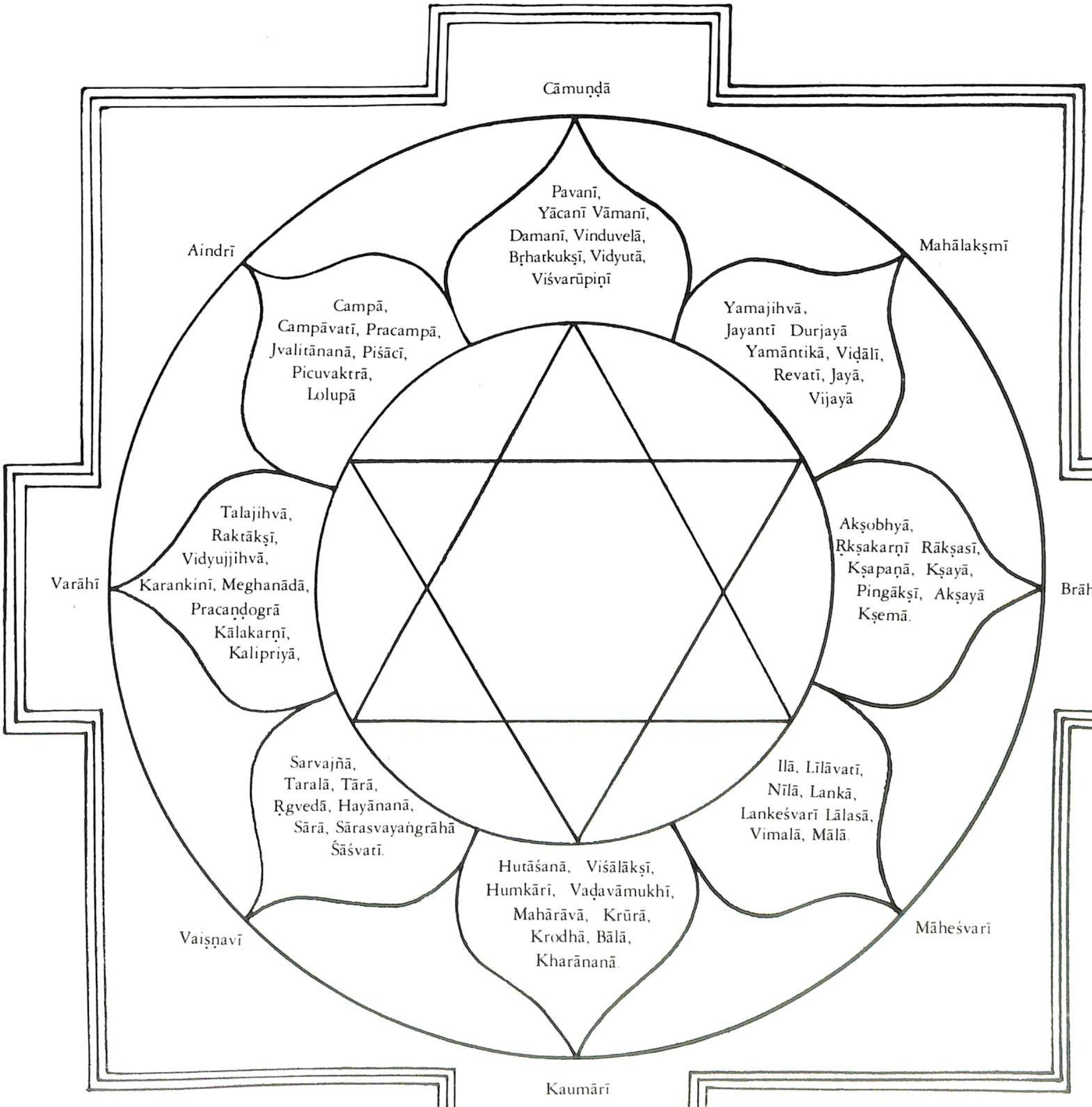
13. *Agni Purāṇa* (52nd ch.)	14. Hemadri	15. P.L.S.S.	16. *Matottara Tantra*
1. Akṣobhyā	Akṣobhyā C. n.a. v. elephant	Akṣobhyā C. golden v. elephant	Akṣobhyā c. red v. makara
2. Ṛkṣakarṇī	Ṛkṣakarṇī c. white v. bear	Ṛkṣakarṇī c. white v. bear	Ṛkṣakarṇī c. bear-hued v. n.a.
3. Rākṣasī	Rākṣasī c. gold v. ox	Rākṣasī c. white v. corpse	Rākṣasī c. blue v. rākṣasī
4. Kṛupaṇā	Kṣapaṇā c. gold v. elephant tusk	Kṣapaṇā c. white v. hunchback male	Kṣapā c. black v. monkey
5. Kṣayā	Kṣayā c. white v. kurma	Kṣayā c. white v. kurma	Kṣayā c. yellow v. monkey
6. Piṅgākṣī	Piṅgākṣī c. brown v. horse	Piṅgākṣī c. brown v. horse	Viviṭā/Cipiṭā c. yellow v. peacock
7. Akṣayā	Akṣayā c. gold v. wolf	Akṣayā c. red v. wolf	Akṣayā c. blue v. boar

8. Kṣemā	Kṣayā c. yellow v. deer	Akṣapā c. yellow v. corpse	Sulālasā c. white & red v. lamb
9. Īlā	Valā c. red v. peacock,	Īlā c. red v. peacock	Helā c. coppery v. mongoose
10. Nilalayā	Līlā c. red v. peacock	Līlāvatī c. blue v. bear	Līlā c. n.a. v. leopard
11. Lolā	Layā c. red v. ox	Layā c. red v. mouse	Lolā c. black/red v. owl
12. Alaktā	Lolā c. n.a. v. dog	Lolā c. red v. bird	Suptā c. smokey v. kite
13. Bālakeśī	Lankā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Lankā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Lubdhā c. black v. bird
14. Lālasā	Lankeśvarī c. n.a. v. n.a.	Lankeśvarī c. red v. n.a.	Lampaṭā c. red v. elephant
15. Vimalā	Lālasā c. n.a. v. boar	Lālasā c. red v. boar	Lankeśvarī c. black v. raksasa
16. Hutāhśā	Vimalā c. red v. elephant	Vimalā c. red v. elephant	Vimalā c. crystal v. crow
17. Viśālākṣī	Hutāśanā c. bright v. fire	Hutāśā c. black v. goat	Hutāśanī c. bright v. lamb
18. Huṅkārī	Viśālākṣī c. n.a. c. n.a.	Viśālākṣā c. white v. piśācha	Viḍālākṣī c. tawny v. tiger
19. Vaḍavā-mukhī	Hunkārā c. n.a. v. fish	Hunkārā c. n.a. v. fish	Hunkārī c. blue v. garuda
20. Mahākrūrā	Vaḍavāmukhī c. n.a. v. colt	Vaḍavāmukhī c. white v. seat	Vaḍvāmukhī c. red v. horse
21. Krodhanā	Hāhārāvā c. black v. donkey	Hāhārāvā c. white v. donkey	Simhanādā c. tawny v. lion
22. Bhayaṅkarī	Mahākrūrā c. black v. buffalo	Mahākrūrā c. white v. buffalo	Revatī c. black v. bear
23. Mahānanā	Krodhanā c. black v. bear	Krodhanā c. black v. jackal	Krodhanā c. smokey v. wolf
24. Sarvajñā	Bhayānanā c. black v. n.a.	Bhayānanā c. black v. garuda	Bhayānanā c. black v. buffalo
25. Taralā	Sarvajñā c. white v. preta	Sarvajñā c. blue v. preta	Sarvajñā c. yellow v. haṁsa

26. Tārā	Taralā c. white v. iguana	Taralā c. blue v. makara	Pecakī c. grey v. dog
27. Ṛgvedā	Tārā c. black v. owl	Tārā c. blue v. parrot	Śāntā c. white v. lotus
28. Hayānanā	Kṛṣṇā c. n.a. v. lotus	Ṛgvedā c. blue v. lotus	Ṛgvedā c. blue v. heron
29. Sārākhyā	Hayānanā c. black v. headless body	Hayānanā c. black v. severed heads	Śubhānanā c. white v. goose
30. Rudrasangrahī	Rasasangrahī c. white v. corpse	Sālā c. blue v. corpse	Sārā c. n.a. v. owl
31. Śambarā	Sārā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Rasasangrahā c. black v. corpse	Viśvarūpā c. blue v. parrot
32. Tālajanghikā	Śabarā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Saravā c. black v. corpse	Sarasvatī c. n.a. v. lotus
33. Raktākṣī	Tālujihvikā c. crystal v. garuda	Tālajanghā c. white v. garuḍa	Tālajanghā c. cloud v. donkey
34. Suprasiddhā	Raktākṣī c. white v. horse	Raktākṣī c. white v. sheep	Bṛhatkukṣī c. black v. ox
35. Vidyutjihvā	Vidyutjihvā c. white v. n.a.	Vidvijihvā c. white v. bird	Vidyutjihvā c. n.a. v. corpse
36. Karankinī	Karankinī c. white v. crocodile	Karankinī c. white v. crocodile	Bhayamkarī c. n.a. v. vulture
37. Meghanādā	Meghanādā c. moonglow v. cloud	Meghanādā c. moonglow v. cloud	Meghanādā c. cloud v. tortoise
38. Pracaṇḍogrā	Pracaṇḍogrā c. crystal v. crocodile	Pracaṇḍogrā c. white v. crocodile	Pracaṇḍā c. black/red v. cat
39. Kālakarṇī	Kālakarṇī c. n.a. v. white ox	Kālakarṇī c. white v. fish	Kālakarṇī c. black v. camel
40. Varapradā	Varadā c. white v. cat	Varapradā c. white v. cat	Rūpahā c. white v. bear
41. Candrā	Candrahāsā c. white v. n.a.	Candrā c. white/yellow v. hamsa	Campakā c. golden v. lion
42. Candrāvalī	Candrāvalī c. golden v. gold throne	Candrāvalā c. golden v. deer	Campāvatī c. golden v. elephant
43. Prapañcā	Visaprapañcikā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Prapancā c. white/yellow v. elephant	Prapancā/ Pralayā c. gold v. preta

44. Pralayantikā	Prapañcikā c. white v. monkey	Pralayantikā c. white/yellow v. monkey	Pralayantā c. black/red v. dove
45. Śiśuvaktrā	Picuvaktrā c. n.a. v. tiger	Picuvakrā c. tawny v. deer	Picuvaktrā c. red v. sparrow
46. Piśācī	Piśācī c. white v. hawk	Piśācī c. white/yellow v. hawk	Piśācī c. blue v. pig
47. Piśitāśā	Piśitāśā c. n.a. v. rhinocerous	Piśitāśā c. tawny v. donkey	Piśitāsavalolupā c. red v. monkey
48. Lolupā	Lolupā c. n.a. v. mule	Lolupā c. yellow v. chariot	Vāmā c. blue/red v. mule
49. Dhamanī	Vāmanī v. n.a. v. chariot	Vāmanā c. white/yellow v. chariot	Vāmanī c. dusky v. garuda
50. Tapanī	Tapanī c. white v. snake	Tapanī c. white/yellow v. snake	Vakṛanāsā c. green v. n.a.
51. Rāginī	Vāmanī c. yellow v. n.a.	Vāmanā c. yellow v. mouse	Vikṛtānanā c. n.a. v. poropine
52. Vikrtānanā	Vikṛtānanā c. n.a. v. lion	Vikṛtānanā c. yellow v. lion	Vāyuvegà c. blue v. deer
53. Vāyuvegā	Vāyuvegikā c. n.a. v. lion chariot	Vāyuvegā c. bright v. horse chariot	Ugrā c. red v. snake
54. Bṛhatkukṣī	Bṛhatkukṣī c. white v. vulture	Bṛhatkukṣī c. white/yellow v. eagle	Vicitrā c. white v. tiger
55. Vikṛtā	Vikṛtā c. white c. camel	Vikṛtā c. white/yellow v. camel	Viśvarūpiṇī c. white v. goat
56. Viśvarūpikā	Viśvarūpikā c. yellow v. garuda	Viśvarūpā c golden v. garuḍa	Yamajihvā c. gold v. boar
57. Yamajihvā	Yamajihvā c. n.a. v. buffalo	Yamajihvā c. black v. buffalo	Pretākṣī c. smokey v. reta
58. Jayantī	Jayantī c. white v. mule	b Jayantī c. white v. bull	Jayantī c. moonlight v. rabbit
59. Durjayā	Durjayā c. white v. dog	Durjayā c. white v. horse	Durjayā c. n.a. v. mule
60. Jayantikā	Yamangikā c. n.a. v. n.a.	Avantikā c. white v. bow	Yamantikā c. n.a. v. fierce
61. Biḍālī	Viḍālī c. white v. cat	Viḍālī c. white v. cat	Pralayī c. n.a. v. small corpse

62. Revatī	Revatī c. n.a. v. skull	Revatī c. white v. corpse	Viḍālī c. black v. cat
63. Pūtanā	Pūtanā c. n.a. c. corpse	Pretanā c. white v. corpse	Asani c. blue v. dwarf
64. Vijayantikā	Vijayantikā c. white v. ox	Jayantikā c. white v. bull	Pūtanā c. blue v. n.a.


Cāmuṇḍā
Pavanī,
Yācanī Vāmanī,
Damanī, Vinduvelā,
Bṛhatkukṣī, Vidyutā,
Viśvarūpiṇī
Aindrī
Mahālakṣmī
Campā,
Campāvatī, Pracampā,
Jvalitānanā, Piśācī,
Picuvaktrā,
Lolupā
Yamajihvā,
Jayantī Durjayā
Yamāntikā, Viḍālī,
Revatī, Jayā,
Vijayā
Talajihvā,
Raktākṣī,
Vidyujjihvā,
Karankinī, Meghanādā,
Pracaṇḍogrā
Kālakarṇī,
Kalipriyā,
Varāhī
Akṣobhyā,
Ṛkṣakarṇī Rākṣasī,
Kṣapaṇā, Kṣayā,
Pingākṣī, Akṣayā
Kṣemā.
Brāhmī
Sarvajñā,
Taralā, Tārā,
Ṛgvedā, Hayānanā,
Sārā, Sārasvayaṅgrāhā
Śāśvatī.
Ilā, Līlāvatī,
Nīlā, Lankā,
Lankeśvarī Lālasā,
Vimalā, Mālā.
Hutāśanā, Viśālākṣī,
Humkārī, Vaḍavāmukhī,
Mahārāvā, Krūrā,
Krodhā, Bālā,
Kharānanā.
Vaiṣṇavī
Māheśvarī
Kaumārī

17. *Agni Purāṇa* Chap. 146

Yoginīs of Group B

	18. Jaipur MS AD 1501	19. S.B. 2/150 62505	20. Baroda 8177
1.	Divyayoginī	Divyayoginī	Divyayogī
2.	Mahāyoginī	Mahāyoginī	Mahāyogī
3.	Siddhayoginī	Siddhayoginī	Siddhayogī
4.	Gaṇeśvarī	Gaṇeśvarī	Maheśvarī
5.	Pretāśī	Ghaṭākṣī	Pretākṣī
6.	Ḍākinī	Ḍākinī	Ḍākinī
7.	Kālī	Kālinī	Kālī
8.	Kālarātri	Kālarātri	Kālarātri
9.	Niśācarī	Niśācarī	Niśācarī
10.	Hunkārī	Śankarī	Hunkāriṇī
11.	Siddha-vaitālī	Raudrī	Raudra-vetālī
12.	Hrīnkārī	Vetālinī	Karālinī
13.	Bhūtaḍāmarī	Bhūtalā	Bhūtaḍāmarī
14.	Ūrdhvakeśī	Sunandā	Ūrdhvakeśī
15.	Mahākālī	Ūrdhvakeśinī	Virūpākṣī
16.	Śuṣkāngī	Virūpākṣī	Māmsa-śoṇitabhojinī
17.	Narabhojinī	Śuṣkāngī	Madrāri
18.	Phetkārī	Narabhojinī	Vīrabhadreśī
19.	Vīrā	Nandā	Dhumrāngī
20.	Dhūmrākṣī	Vīrā	Kalahapriyā
21.	Kalipriyā	Vīrabhadrā	Rākṣasī
22.	Raktākṣī	Dhūmrākṣī	Ghora-raktāksī
23.	Ghora-raktā	Kalahapriyā	Viśvarūpī
24.	Virūpākṣī	Rākṣasī	Bhayankarī
25.	Bhayankarī	Ghorā	Vīra-Kāumarī
26.	Vīrā	Raktākṣī	Caṇḍī
27.	Kaumārikā	Viśvarūpā	Varāhī
28.	Caṇḍī	Bhayankarī	Rūpadhāriṇī
29.	Varāhī	Caṇḍikā	Bhayāsurī
30.	Muṇḍadhāriṇī	Nīrā	Raudrahnkāri
31.	Bhāskarī	Kaumārī	Bhīṣaṇī
32.	Vajraṇī	Varāhī	Tripurāntakī
33.	Krodhā	Muṇḍadhārinī	Bhaya-vidhvansinī
34.	Durmukhī	Asurā	Krodhī
35.	Pretavāhinī	Raudra-sankarinī	Durmukhī
36.	Kanṭakī	Peśanā	Pretavāhinī
37.	Dīrghalamboṣṭī	Tripurāntakā	Khanginī
38.	Mālinī	Bhairavī	Dīrghalamboṣṭī
39.	Mantrayoginī	Dhvamsinī	Mālinī
40.	Kālinī	Krodhā	Mantrayoginī
41.	Modanī	Durmukhī	Sakala-grahiṇī
42.	Cakrī	Pretavāhinī	Cakriṇī
43.	Kankālī	Khaṭvānginī	Lankālinī
44.	Bhuvaneśvarī	Dīrghalamboṣṭī	Bhuvaneśvarī
45.	Krubhalā	Mālinī	Kanṭakī
46.	Tāluki	Mantrayoginī	Trotakaumārī
47.	Lakṣmī	Kālāgnihāni	Yamadūtī
48.	Yamadūtī	Kankālī	Karālinī
49.	Karālinī	Bhuvaneśvarī	Keśinī
50.	Kauśikī	Trātinī	Māhinī
51.	Bhakṣinī	Yamadūtī	Cakrī
52.	Yakṣī	Karālinī	Roma janghasuvanginī

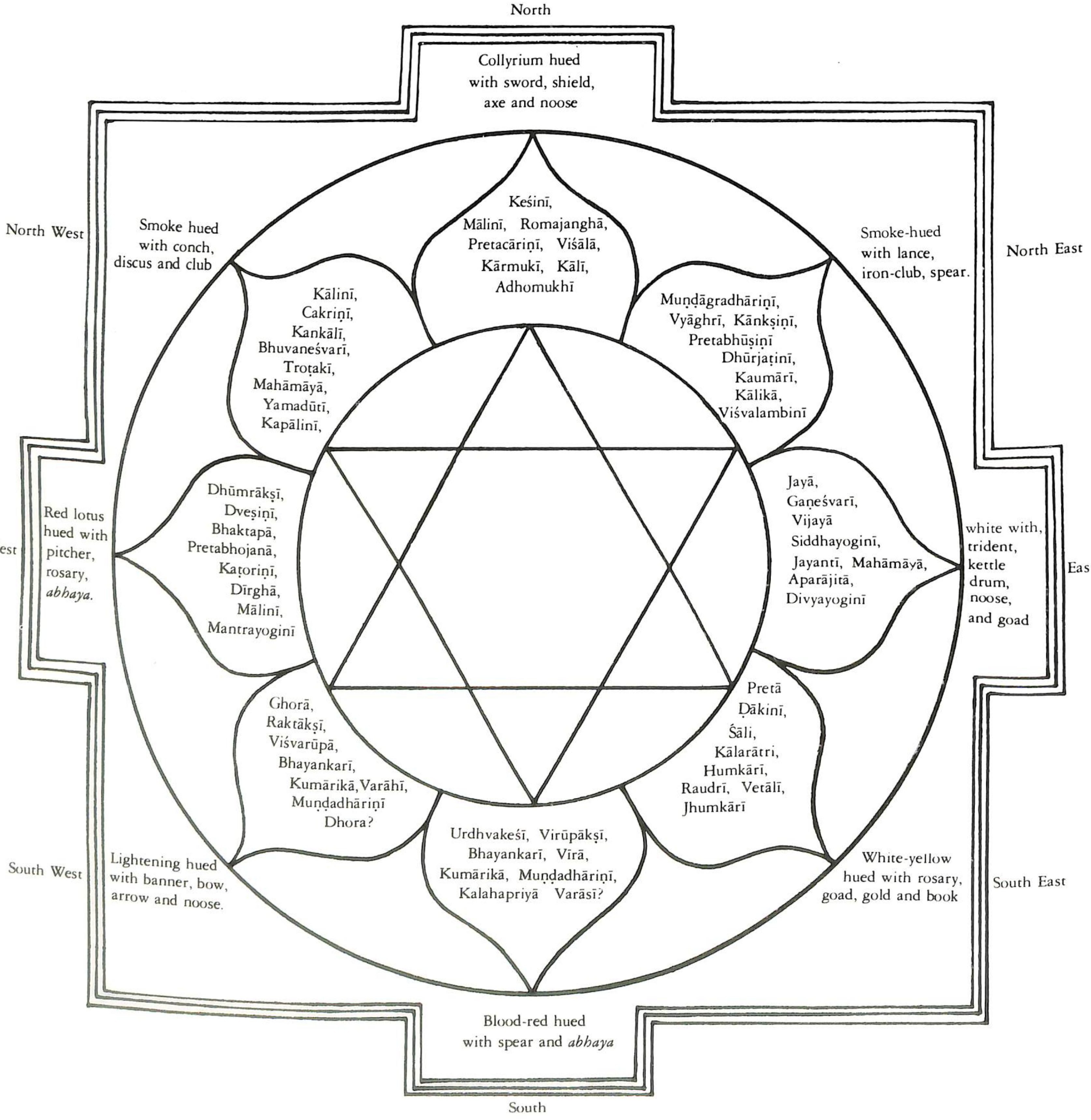
53. Kaumārī	Ghorākṣī	Parākṣī
54. Yantravāhinī	Kārmukī	Kaikamuki
55. Viśālī	Kākadṛṣṭi	Kākadṛṣṭi
56. Kāmukī	Adhomukhī	Adhomukhī
57. Vyāghrī	Muṇḍāgradhāriṇī	Muṇḍāgradhāriṇī
58. Yaksiṇī	Kinkinī	Vyāghrī
59. Pretabhūṣiṇī	Pretabhakṣinī	Kinkiṇī
60. Durjaṭī	Kāmarūpā	Pretabhakṣiṇī
61. Vikatī	Kāmākṣī	Durjaṭī
62. Ghorī	Mahālakṣmī	Vikaṭī
63. Kālī	Ekavīrā	Ghorakapālī
64. Viśālāngulī	Kālarātri	Viṣabhakṣiṇī

21. Sixty four Yoginīs in *Cakra* of Sixty-four squares

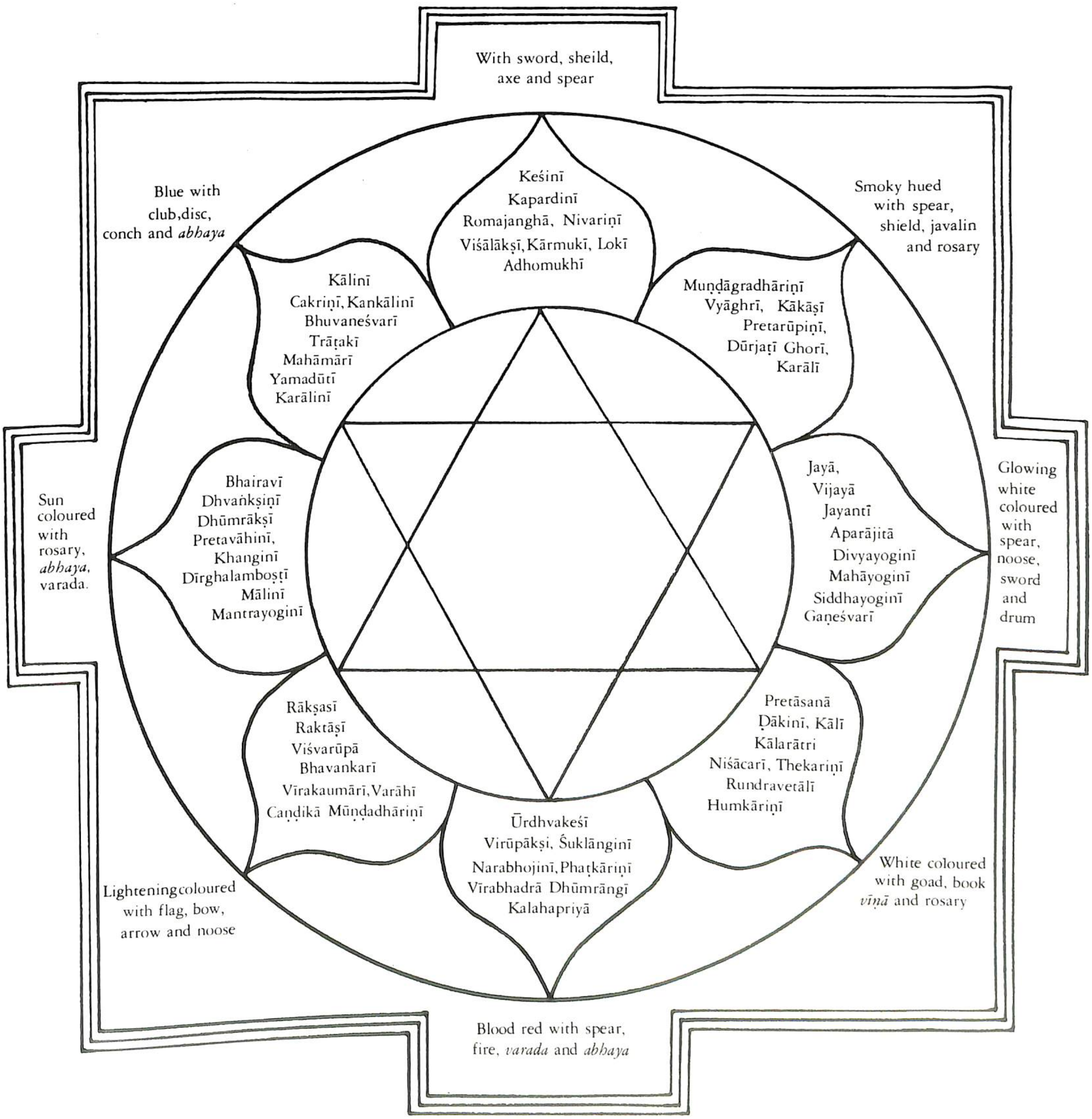
Kālī 8	Kālarātri 7	Pretabhakṣiṇī 59	Dhūrjaṭī 60	Vikaṭī 61	il. 62	Mahāyogī 2	Divyayogī 1
Yoginī 16	il. 15	Duṣṭabhakṣiṇī 51	Rākṣasī 52	Kumārī 53	Yantravāhinī 54	Hrīnkārī 10	Niśācarī 9
Mohanī 41	Chakrī 42	Raktā 22	Kalahapriyā 21	Dhūmrākṣī 20	Vīrabhadrā 19	Lakṣmī 47	Janmadūtī 48
Krodhā 33	Durmukhī 34	Muṇḍadhāriṇī 30	Varāhī 29	Caṇḍā 28	Kumārikā 27	Mantrayoginī 39	Kamalā 40
Bhayankarī 25	Vīrā 26	Mālanī 38	Dīrghalamboṣṭi 37	Kaṭakī 36	Pretavāhinī 35	Bhairavī 31	Vīrabhadrā 32
Narabhojinī 17	Phetkārī 18	Trāṭakī 46	Krubalā 45	Bhuvaneśvarī 44	Kankālī 43	Ghoraraktā 23.	il. 24
Ka... 56	Nivāriṇī 55	Siddhavetālī 11	Klīnkārī 12	Bhūtadāyanī 13	Ūrdhvakeśī 14	il. 50	Karālī 49
Viśālāngā 64	Kapilā 63	Siddhayogī 3	Yogeśvarī 4	Bhūtapretapiśāca mardinī 5	Maheśvarī 6	Cakraṇī 58	Vyāghrī 57

il =illegible

22. Mss.D 14662 (Madras)


North
Collyrium hued with sword, shield, axe and noose
Keśinī, Mālinī, Romajanghā, Pretacāriṇī, Viśālā, Kārmukī, Kālī, Adhomukhī
North West
Smoke hued with conch, discus and club
Kālinī, Cakriṇī, Kankālī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Troṭakī, Mahāmāyā, Yamadūtī, Kapālinī,
North East
Smoke-hued with lance, iron-club, spear.
Muṇḍāgradhāriṇī, Vyāghrī, Kānkṣiṇī, Pretabhūṣiṇī Dhūrjaṭinī, Kaumārī, Kālikā, Viśvalambinī
West
Red lotus hued with pitcher, rosary, abhaya.
Dhūmrākṣī, Dveṣiṇī, Bhaktapā, Pretabhojanā, Kaṭoriṇī, Dīrghā, Mālinī, Mantrayoginī
East
white with, trident, kettle drum, noose, and goad
Jayā, Gaṇeśvarī, Vijayā Siddhayoginī, Jayantī, Mahāmāyā, Aparājitā, Divyayoginī
Ghorā, Raktākṣī, Viśvarūpā, Bhayankarī, Kumārikā, Varāhī, Muṇḍadhāriṇī Dhora?
Pretā Ḍākinī, Śāli, Kālarātri, Humkārī, Raudrī, Vetālī, Jhumkārī
South West
Lightening hued with banner, bow, arrow and noose.
Urdhvakeśī, Virūpākṣī, Bhayankarī, Vīrā, Kumārikā, Muṇḍadhāriṇī, Kalahapriyā Varāsī?
South East
White-yellow hued with rosary, goad, gold and book
Blood-red hued with spear and abhaya
South

23. Mss.28/179 (Sarasvati Bhavan)


With sword, sheild,
axe and spear
Blue with
club,disc,
conch and *abhaya*
Keśinī
Kapardinī
Romajanghā, Nivariṇī
Viśālākṣī, Kārmukī, Lokī
Adhomukhī
Smoky hued
with spear,
shield, javalin
and rosary
Kālinī
Cakriṇī, Kankālinī
Bhuvaneśvarī
Trāṭakī
Mahāmārī
Yamadūtī
Karālinī
Muṇḍāgradhāriṇī
Vyāghrī, Kākāṣī
Pretarūpiṇī,
Dūrjaṭī Ghorī,
Karālī
Sun
coloured
with
rosary,
abhaya,
varada.
Bhairavī
Dhvaṅkṣiṇī
Dhūmrākṣī
Pretavāhinī,
Khanginī
Dīrghalamboṣṭī
Mālinī
Mantrayoginī
Jayā,
Vijayā
Jayantī
Aparājitā
Divyayoginī
Mahāyoginī
Siddhayoginī
Gaṇeśvarī
Glowing
white
coloured
with
spear,
noose,
sword
and
drum
Rākṣasī
Raktāṣī
Viśvarūpā
Bhavankarī
Vīrakaumārī, Varāhī
Caṇḍikā Mūṇḍadhāriṇī
Pretāsanā
Ḍākinī, Kālī
Kālarātri
Niśācarī, Thekariṇī
Rundravetālī
Humkāriṇī
Ūrdhvakeśī
Virūpākṣi, Śuklānginī
Narabhojinī, Phaṭkāriṇī
Vīrabhadrā Dhūmrāngī
Kalahapriyā
White coloured
with goad, book
vīṇā and rosary
Lighteningcoloured
with flag, bow,
arrow and noose
Blood red with spear,
fire, *varada* and *abhaya*

(Directions not specified)

24. *Kubjikāpūjāpaddhati*

1. Jayā
2. Vijayā
3. Jayantī
4. Aparājitā
5. Nandā
6. Bhadrā
7. Bhīmā
8. Divyayogī
9. Siddhayogī
10. Gaṇeśvarī
11. Śākinī
12. Kālarātri
13. Urdhvakeśī
14. Niśākarī
15. Gambhīrā
16. Bhūṣaṇī
17. Sthūlāngī
18. Pavagī
19. Kallolā
20. Vimalā
21. Mahānandā
22. Jvālāmukhī
23. Vidyā
24. Pakṣiṇī
25. ?
26. Viṣabhakṣiṇī
27. Mahāsiddhipradā
28. Tuṣṭidā
29. Icchāsiddhi
30. Kuvarṇikā
31. Bhāsurā
32. Mīnākṣī
33. Dīrghāngā
34. Kalahapriyā
35. Tripurāntikā
36. Rākṣasī
37. Ghorā
38. Raktākṣī
39. Viśvarūpā
40. Bhayankarī
41. Phetkārī
42. Raudrī
43. Vetālī
44. Śuṣkāngā
45. Narabhojinī
46. Vīrabhadrā
47. Mahākālī
48. Karālī
49. Vikṛtānanā
50. Koṭarākṣī
51. Bhīmā
52. Bhīmabhadrā
53. Subhadrā
54. Vāyuvegā
55. Hayānanā
56. Brahmāṇī
57. Vaiṣṇavī
58. Raudrī
59. Mātangī
60. Carcikeśvarī
61. Īśvarī
62. Varāhī
63. Subaḍi
64. Ambā.

25. *Śrī Tattava Nidhi*

1. Divyayogā
2. Mahayogā
3. Siddhayogā
4. Maheśvarī
5. Piśācinī
6. Ḍākini
7. Kālarātri
8. Niśācarī
9. Kankālī
10. Raudra-vetālī
11. Hunkārī
12. Bhuvaneśvarī
13. Ūrdhvakeśī
14. Virūpākṣī
15. Śuṣkāngī
16. Narabhojinī
17. Phaṭkārī
18. Vīrabhadrā
19. Dhūmrākṣī
20. Kalahapriyā
21. Raktākṣī
22. Rākṣasī
23. Ghorā
24. Viśvarūpā
25. Bhayankarī
26. Kamākṣī
27. Ugracāmuṇḍā
28. Bhīṣaṇā
29. Tripurāntakā
30. Vīrakaumārikā
31. Chaṇḍī
32. Varāhī
33. Muṇḍadhāriṇī
34. Bhairavī
35. Hastinī
36. Krīdhā-durmukhī
37. Pretavāhinī
38. Khatvānga-dīrghalamboṣṭī
39. Mālatī
40. Mantrayoginī
41. Astinī
42. Cakriṇī
43. Grahā
44. Kankālī
45. Bhuvaneśvarī
46. Kaṭakī
47. Kanṭakī
48. Śubhrā
49. Kriyādūtī
50. Karālinī
51. Śankinī
52. Padminī
53. Kṣirahyasandhā
54. Prahariṇī
55. Lakṣmī
56. Kāmukhī
57. Lolā
58. Kākadṛṣṭi
59. Adhomukhī
60. Durjatī
61. Mālinī
62. Ghorā
63. Kapālī
64. Viśabhojinī

26. *Śāradā Tilaka, Bhūta-Lipi-Mātṛkā Pūjā-Vidhi, Devī Bhāgavatam*

1. Pingalākṣī
2. Viśālākṣī
3. Samṛddhi
4. Vṛddhi
5. Sraddhā
6. Svāhā
7. Svadhā
8. Māyā
9. Vasundharā

10. Sanjñā
11. Trilokadhātṛi
12. Sāvitrī
13. Gāyatrī
14. Tridaśeśvarī
15. Surūpā
16. Bahurūpā
17. Skandamātā
18. Acyutapriyā
19. Vimalā
20. Amalā
21. Āruṇi
22. Āruṇi
23. Prakṛti
24. Vikṛti
25. Sṛṣti
26. Sthiti
27. Samhṛti
28. Sandhyā
29. Mātā
30. Satī
31. Hamsī
32. Mardikā
33. Kubjikā
34. Aparā
35. Devamātā
36. Bhagavatī
37. Devakī
38. Kamalāsanā
39. Trimukhī
40. Saptamukhī
41. Surāsuravimardinī
42. Lamboṣṭī
43. Ūrdhvakeśī
44. Bahuśīrṣā
45. Vṛkodarī
46. Rathārekhā
47. Śaśirekhā
48. Parā
49. Gaganavegā
50. Pavanavegā
51. Bhuvanamālā
52. Madanāturā
53. Anangā
54. Anangamadanā
55. Anangamekhalā
56. Anangakusumā
57. Viśvarūpā
58. Asurabhayankarī
59. Akṣobhyā
60. Satyavādinī
61. Vajrarūpā
62. Śucivṛatā
63. Varadā
64. Vāgīśī

27. *Skanda Purāṇa, Kāśi Khaṇḍa*

1. Gajānanā	elephant-faced
2. Simhamukhī	lion-faced
3. Gṛdrāsyā	vulture-faced
4. Kākatuṇḍikā	crow-beaked
5. Uṣṭragrīvā	camel-necked
6. Hayagrīvā	horse-necked
7. Varāhī	sow
8. Śarabhānanā	mythical creature, half horse
9. Ulūkikā	owl-like
10. Śivārāvā	jackal-voiced
11. Mayurī	peacock
12. Vikaṭānanā	fearsome-faced
13. Aṣṭavaktrā	eight-faced
14. Koṭarākṣī	hollow-eyed
15. Kubjā	hunch-backed
16. Vikaṭalocanā	fearsome-eyed
17. Śuṣkodarī	dried abdomen
18. Lalajjihvā	tongue hanging out
19. Śvadamṣṭrā	canine-toothed
20. Vānarānanā	monkey-faced
21. Ṛkṣāksī	bear-eyed
22. Kekarākṣī	squit-eyed
23. Bṛhattuṇḍā	large-faced
24. Surāpriyā	fond of wine
25. Kapālahastā	skull-cap in hand
26. Raktākṣī	blood-eyed
27. Śukī	parrot
28. Śyenī	hawk
29. Kapotikā	dove
30. Pāśahastā	noose in hand
31. Daṇḍahastā	club in hand
32. Pracaṇḍā	terribly terrible
33. Caṇḍahastā	terrible-handed

34. Śiśughnī	killer of children
35. Pāpahantrī	destroyer of sins
36. Kālī	black one
37. Rudhirapāyinī	drinker of blood
38. Vasādhayā	?
39. Garbha-bhakṣā	eater of foetus
40. Śava-hastā	corpse in hand
41. Āntra-mālinī	garlanded with intestines
42. Sthūla-keśī	rough grip on hair
43. Bṛhatkukṣī	large-girdled
44. Sarpāsyā	snake-faced
45. Pretavāhanā	one whose vehicle is a *preta*
46. Daṇḍaśūkakarā	Venomous one
47. Krauncī	heron
48. Mṛgaśīrśā	deer-headed buffalo
49. Vṛsānanā	ox-faced
50. Vyattasyā	open-mouthed
51. Dhūmaniśvāsā	inhale of smoke
52. Vyomaika	She of the sky?
53. Charaṇordhvadūk	?
54. Tāpanī	burning one
55. Śoṣaṇi-drṣṭi	one with a shrivelling look
56. Koṭarī	lives in a hole
57. Sthūlanāsikā	large-nosed
58. Vidyutprabhā	one with the glow of lightening
59. Balākāsyā	crane-faced
60. Mārjārī	cat
61. Kaṭapūtanā	departed spirit
62. Aṭṭāṭahāsā	one with a very loud laugh
63. Kāmākṣī	eyes of love
64. Mṛgākṣī	eyes of a deer

Appendix III

Two Unfolding Formations of 64 Yoginīs

Of the various manuscripts thus far explored that contain lists of names of the 64 Yoginīs, two texts refer to Yoginī formations, visualized as an unfolding series of lotus petals with goddesses seated on each set of petals. The formations of the two texts differ somewhat, but both commence with a lesser number of petals at the centre and culminate in a fully expanded cricle of 64 petals on which are seated 64 Yoginīs.

I. Bhūta-lipi-mātṛkā-pūjā-vidhi

This brief manuscript (some thirty verses only) contains instructions for drawing an elaborate formation of goddesses with red *kumkum* powder upon a gold tablet. It tells us to first draw a lotus of 4 petals; outside this a lotus of 8 petals is to be inscribed; and this is to be followed successively by circles of 16, 32 and finally of 64 petals.

> *svarṇādipaṭṭe kumkumādinā catvāradala kamalam viracya tad bahir aṣṭa dalam tad bahir ṣodaśadalam tad bahir dvātrimśaddalam tad bahir catuṣaṣṭidalam tad bahir caturdvārayuktam caturasram trayam iti pūjācakram nirmāya prāgvatpurata samsthāpya....*

The text then lists the names of the goddesses to be seated on the petals and worshipped. It may be noted that the goddesses are here referred to as *devīs* and not Yoginīs.

4 Petals: Ambikā, Vāgbhavā, Durgā, Śrī.

8 Petals: Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakṣmi.

16 Petals: Karālī, Vikarālī, Umā, Sarasvatī, Śrī, Durgā, Uṣā, Lakṣmī, Śruti, Smṛti, Dhṛti, Sraddhā, Medhā, Mati, Kānti, Āryā.

32 Petals: Vidyā, Hrī, Puṣṭi, Prajñā, Sinīvālī, Kuhrī, Rudravīryā, Prabhā, Nandā, Poṣiṇī, Dvidhā, Kālarātri, Moharātrī, Bhadrakālī, Kapardinī, Vikṛtā, Daṇḍī, Muṇḍī, Sendukhadā, Śikhaṇḍī, Niśumbhamayī, Śumbhamayī, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Indrāṇī, Rudrāṇī, Sankarārdhaśarīriṇī, Nāryounārāyaṇī, Triśūlinī, Pālinī, Ambikā, Hlādinī.

64 Petals: Pingākṣī, Viśālākṣī, Samṛddhi, Vṛddhi, Śraddhā, Svāhā, Bhikṣā, Māyā, Vasundharā, Trilokadhātri, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, Tridaśeśvarī, Surpāyī, Bahurūpā, Caṇḍamātā, Acyutapriyā, Vimalā, Kamalā, Aruṇā, Anantā, Arogi, Prakṛti, Sṛṣṭi, Sthiti, Samhṛti, Sandhyā, Mati, Satī, Hamsī, Mardikā, Parādevatā, Devamātā, Bhagavatī, Devakī, Kamalāsanā, Trimukhī, Saptamukhī, Suravimardinī, Asuravimardinī, Lamboṣṭī, Ūrdhvakeśī, Bahuśīrśā, Vṛkodarī, Rathareṣī, Śaśirekhā, Gaganavegā, Pavanavegā, Bhuvanapālā, Madanāturā, Anangā, Anangamadanā, Anangamekhalā, Anangakusumā, Viśvarūpā, Surabhayankarī, Asurabhayankarī, Akṣobhyā, Satyavādinī, Vajrarūpā, Śucivaktrā, Varadā, Vagīśī.

For comments on this group of 64, refer back to Appendix II, p. 204.

II. Śrī Matottara Tantra

This tantra contains, in its various chapters, two differing lists of 64 Yoginīs and one list of 81 Yoginīs. In its 20th chapter, it speaks at length of the *khecarī cakra* which is visualized as commencing with a lotus of 12 petals, followed by a circle of 24 petals, surrounded by a formation of 32 petals, and culminating in a cakra of 64 petals. The goddesses of these various circles are referred to as Yoginīs, each group being described as successively more powerful than the previous set.

12 Petals: Subhramā, Vibhramā, Raudrā, Kumbhikā, Kauśikā, Śukā, Suśukā, Khagā, Bimbā, Mṛgā, Rambhā, Mahotkaṭā. (all beautiful-bodied and intoxicated with their own youth)

24 Petals: Kadambā (lion), Siddhidā (corpse), Lakṣmī *(makara)*, Jvālāmukhī (?), Māyā (owl), Praśamā (jackal), Vāyuvegā (deer), Pavanā (tiger), Ūrdhvakeśī (corpse), Karmamoṭī (bear), Ambikā (peacock), Ambikeśvarī (swan), Agnivaktrā (lamb), Pingākṣī (ox), Gokarṇī (lotus bud), Kramaṇī *(preta)*, Camuṇḍā (bear), Prasanāsyā (?), Vidyuttejā (?), Mahākeśī (?), Agnijvālā *(makara)*. Lokamātā (lion throne), Kampinī (corpse), Bhagna-nāsā (horse.)

32 Petals: Caṇḍā, Ghaṇṭā, Mahānāmā, Sumukhī, Durmukhī, Bālā, Revatī, Pramathā, Ghorā, Saumyā, Bhīmā, Mahābalā, Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī, Aparājitā, Mahotkaṭā, Virūpākṣī, Śuṣkā, Ākāśamātara, Samhārī, Jāṭahārī, Damṣṭrālī, Śuṣkarevatī, Pipīlikā, Puṣpahārī, Grasanī, Śasyahārikā, Bhadrakālī, Subhadrā, Bhadrabhīmā, Subhadrikā. (all young, long-bellied, short and rounded in form.)

64 Petals. Akṣobhyā, Ṛkṣakarṇī, Rākṣasī, Kṣapā, Kṣayā, Cipiṭā, Kṛṣṇā, Sulālasā, Helā, Līlā, Lolā, Suptā, Lubdā, Lampaṭā, Lankeśvarī, Vimalā, Hutāśanī, Viḍālākṣī, Hunkārī, Vaḍavāmukhī, Simhanādā, Revatī, Krodhanā, Bhayānanā, Sarvajñā, Pecakī, Śāntā, Ṛgvedā, Subhānanā, Sārā, Viśvarūpā, Sarasvatī, Tālajanghā, Bṛhatkukṣī, Vidyutjihvā, Bhayankarī, Meghanādā, Pracaṇḍā, Kalakarṇī, Rūpahā, Pañcā, Pañcāvatī, Prapañcā, Pralayānśakī, Picuvaktrā, Piśācī, Piśitāsavalolupā, Vāmā, Vāmanī, Vakranāsā, Vikṛtānanā, Vāyuvegā, Ugrā, Vicitrā, Viśvarūpiṇī, Yamajihvā, Jayantī, Durjayā, Yamāntikā, Pralayī, Viḍālī, Aśanī, Pūtanā.

For a detailed discussion of this group of 64 Yoginīs, refer to Appendix II.

Notes of the Text

Notes on Preface

1. *Lalitā Sahasranāma.* (1951) ch. 3, v. 83
   yo dadāti vimūḍhātmā śrīvidyārahitāya ca
   tasmai kupyanti yoginyaḥ so anarthaḥ sumahān smṛtah
2. *Jñānārṇava,* (1912) paṭala 13, v. 4: *yoginīnām bhavedbhakṣyaḥ*
3. Coomaraswamy (1965) p. 110 found these shrines intriguing enough to devote a paragraph to them.
4. Gopinath Rao (1968) does not even refer to the Yoginīs. J.N. Banerjea (1974) p. 466 makes brief passing reference to them as consorts of the 64 Bhairavas.
5. N.N. Bhattacharya (1977) refers briefly to Yoginīs and their temples, Balram Srivastava (1978) starts with the unfounded premise that the Śrī Cakra Yoginīs are identical with the Yoginīs of the Yoginī temples, and only serves to confuse and complicate an intricate situation. Two valuable discussions on Yoginīs are both regrettably brief: Karambelkar article's (1955) and Mallmann's (1963) ch. VIII.
6. Rawson (1973a) and Mookerjee (1966 & 1971) refer to the Yoginī only as partner in *maithuna,* the sexual ritual of the tantrics and do not refer to Yoginī temples at all. Mookerjee (1971) Plate 61 considers even the famous Mohenjodaro dancing girl as such a Yoginī. Nik Douglas (1971) refers to the Yoginī temples as energy circles, and includes photographs of the two Orissan temples. Recently, Douglas (1979) has identified each Yoginī of Ranipur-Jharial with a Tarot card and has arrived at conclusions that are far from the truth.

Notes to Chapter 1.

1. *Kulārṇava* (1915), ch. 5, v. 79. Also *Kaulāvalīnirṇaya* (1941), ch. 4 & 5.
2. *Kulārṇava,* ch. 11, v. 56.
3. Penzer (1924-28) vol. VI, p. 60, quotes tale as being from manuscript version in the British Museum.
4. Sarasvath (1961) & 1973). Book VII, ch. 3, vs. 109-137 and 150-171.
5. R.S. Pandit (1968), ch. 2, vs 98-108, pp. 59ff.
6. Raghunath Singh (1969), v. 108, p. 423.
7. Sarasvath (1961) Bk. XII, ch. 8, vs. 172-178, p. 289.
8. Eliade (1958), p. 142. It is of interest to mention here a people called Bez who occupy the Mayang village a few miles from Gauhati in Assam, and a short distance from the famous Kāmākhyā temple. These people are regarded with overwhelming terror because they are said to have the power to transform men into animals and keep them in captivity, just as the Yoginīs and Sākinīs were reputed to do. And this fear still persists in the year 1980.
9. As quoted in Lorenzen (1972), p. 22, p. 50, p. 56f.
10. See Lorenzen (1972) for details of this sect.
11. Tawney (1880) Vol. I, pp. 154-158. Also Sarasvath (1961), pp. 381-391.
12. Sarasvath (1961).
13. Emeneau (1934), story one of prince Vajramukta.
14. Sarasvath (1961), Bk. XII, ch. 4.

15. Kale (1966), ch. 6, p. 170.
16. Manuscripts with this title are to be found in several libraries includng the Baroda Oriental Institute and the Sarasvati Bhavan, Varanasi. See also Dinanath Jha (1964). Apart from works on all eight Yoginīs, there are those devoted to just one, as for example the manuscript *Sankaṭa Yoginī Pūjā Vidhi* (No. B.D. 182) in the Bombay Asiatic Society.
17. Agarchand Nahta (1962)
18. For detalis see Woodroffe (1974).
19. Woodroffe (1971)
20. Balram Srivastava (1978), ch. VI entitled "She in her minor forms" speaks of the Śrī Cakra Yoginīs, the Yoginīs of the internal cakras, and the lists of Yoginīs of the Yoginī temple variety without so much as mention that these three types are conceptually different.
21. *Lalitā Sahasranāma* (1951), title 653, p. 263.
22. *ibid.* title 95, p. 89.
23. *ibid.* quoted as part of commentary to title 632, p. 257.
24. *ibid.* title 441, p. 216.
25. *Kulārṇava*. ch. 10, v. 73
26. Manuscript No. BMC 161.14/5793, Bombay University Library.
27. Appendix I. List 4.
28. Kaviraj (n.d.), p. 230, ch. 10, v. 90.
29. Appendix I, List 10.
30. Vedavyas (1965), p. 785.
31. Ramteja Pandeya (1960), pp. 817ff.
32. See for instance *Skanda Puräna, (Kaśï Khanda)*
33. Bagchi (1934), paṭala 23.
34. This translation has been made with the help of Mrs. Manikuntala Bhowmik, from Pandit Sivadatta (1901) and Sundarlal Sastri (1960), pp. 26-28. See also Handiqui (1968), p. 56f.
35. *Lalitā Sahasranāma*, title 237, p. 130.
36. *Bṛhadtantrasāraḥ*. (Vasumati Sahitya Mandir, 10th edn., Calcutta, n.d.), p. 311.
37. P. Kumar (1974), p. 144, quotes the 59th chapter that describes Kālī's residence and speaks of her 64 maid servants, the Yoginīs, who perform all the duties pertaining to the city.
38. Baladeva Upadhyaya (1972), ch. 61, vs. 114-116.
39. Bhaskararaya's commentary on title 237, p. 130, states that Brāhmī and the other Mātṛkās each has eight *śaktis* each, Akṣobhyā etc. who are parts of them.
40. Tawney (1880), pp. 552ff. Also Sarsavath (1961) ch. 6, vs. 76-106.
41. Tawney (1880), pp. 604f. Also Sarasvath (1973), Bk. XVIII, ch. 4, vs. 207-225, pp. 1156-1159.
42. Vedavyas (1965), p. 785.
43. Baladeva Upadhyaya (1966), pp. 80ff.
44. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 8, v. 32. Also *Meru Tantra* in Dhana Sham Sher (1968), Vol. III, p. 426.
45. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 17, v. 100.
46. The significanc of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* in relation to the Yoginīs was pointed out to me by Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, who spent much time in going through the text with me from the Bengali published version of Upendrakumar Das (B.E. 1383). Subsequently, I have also been through the Sanskrit text in Avalon (1965). The English readings given therein by M.S. Pandit are misleading for one interested in Yoginīs, since his readings do not even mention the word 'yoginī'.
47. *Kulārṇava* ch. 8, v. 76.
48. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 22, v. 333.
49. *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, ch. 8.
50. Bagchi (1934), paṭala 2, vs. 6, 7.
51. *ibid.* ch. 16. The schools mentioned include Mahākaula, Siddhakaula, Jñānanirṇītikaula, Mahatkaula and Siddhāmṛtakaula. It continues *mahāyoginīkaule Matsyendrapādāvatārite.*
52. Janardhan Pandeya (1976).
53. *ibid.* Each chapter ends thus: *manmahāmanthānavinirgate saptakotyarbude*

svacchandaśaktyāvatārite gorakṣasamhitāyām śatasāhasrakhaṇḍantargate śrīmatottare khaṇḍe kādibhede kulakaulinīmate navakoṭyavatārabhede śrīkanṭhanāthāvatārite vidyāpīṭhe yoginīguhy...

54. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 17, v. 102.
55. *ibid.* ch. 8, v. 50.
56. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 20, v. 28: *śṛṣṭisamhārakāriṇī.*
57. *Kulārṇava*. ch. 8, v. 103
cakramadhye tu mūḍhātmā jātibhedam karoti yaḥ
tam bhakṣayanti yoginyastvām śape kulanāyike
58. *ibid.* ch. 10 vs. 106, 107.
59. *ibid.* ch. 8, v. 79,
cakre madākulān dṛṣṭvā cintayeddevatādhiyā
modate vandate bhaktyā sa gacchet yoginīpadam
60. *ibid.* ch. 11, v. 65.
61. Bagchi (1934), paṭala 23.
62. *idem.*
63. *Kulārṇava* ch. 10, v. 118.
khabhūmidigjalagirivanasarvacarah priye
sahasrakoṭi yoginyastāvanto bhairava api
64. *ibid.* ch. 7, v. 13.
65. *ibid.* ch. 10, v. 89.
66. *ibid.* ch. 10, vs. 133, 134.
67. Bagchi (1934), paṭala 23.
68. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), chs. 19, 20, 27; See Chapter 2 "The Circle and Cakras of Yoginīs."
69. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 10, v. 82.
70. Baladeva Upadhyaya (1966) p.70 & p. 234.
71. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 8, v.31. These are two alternate readings.
72. *ibid.* ch. 10, v. 16.
73. See note 44 above.
74. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 23, v. 124.
75. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964), Vol. IV. 1 pp. 210, 212.
Siddhakanyāyutām divyām yoginībhiḥ samanvitām
tatra madhye sthitām deva bhairavam bhayanāśanam.
76. *ibid.* Vol. IV.2, p. 109, 110
ādivargakramāntastham yugasiddhacatuṣṭayam.
aṣṭāṣṭakakramāyāntam tam vande kulanāyakam
Śrī Śrī pīṭhamayantastham guhyapīṭhapari sthitam
anantācakramārūḍham Sarvavarṇavibhūṣitam
yoginīvṛndasanghuṣṭam ānandamagramīśvaram.
77. *ibid.* p. 140.
78. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 10, v. 122.
79. Vrajavallabha Dvivedi (1968), ch. 4, v. 54, p. 252.
80. Gopinath Kaviraj (1963), ch. 3, vs. 190-196.
81. *Jñānārṇava*, ch. 10, v. 75 & ch. 19, v. 38.
82. *ibid.* ch. 13, v.
83. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 11, vs. 66-68.
84. Ramadutta Shukla (1960), ch. 15.
85. Coomaraswamy (1928-31), p.9.
86. Shyambihari Misra (nd), patala 9
rātrou devālayam gatvā śubhā śayyopakalpayet
jāti puṣpena vastreṇa candanena ca pūjayet
dhūpam ca guggulam datvā japedaṣṭasahasrakam
japānte śīghramāyāti cumbatyālingayatyapi
sarvālankārasamyuktā sambhogādisamanvitā
kuberasya gṛhadeva dravyamākṛṣya yacchati.
87. The Sarasvati Bhavan manuscript library contains several such texts. The *Bṛhadtantrasāra* (ed. Mukhopadhyaya and Mukhopadhyaya), quoting the *Bhūtaḍāmara*, has a section entitled *Yoginī Sādhanā*. Eight Yoginīs are mentioned: Surasundarī, Sarvamanoharī, Kanakavatī, Kanakeśvarī, Ratipriyā, Padminī, Mahanati, Anurāginī.
88. *Yoginī Sādhanā prayoga*, Manuscript No. 5/16, Sarasvati Bhavan, Varanasi.

89. M.B. Jhavery (1944), pp. 334-335.
90. Manuscript No. 1897 in Bombay University Library.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Carl G. Jung (1979), p. 240.
2. Debala Mitra (1971), p.41f. Also Dehejia (1972) p.85.
3. A. Tripathi (1968), ch. 55, vs. 17-31. Also Upadhyaya (1966) ch. 104, vs. 17, 18, which lists under the title of Kailasa for circular, the following: Valaya, Dundubhi, Padma, Mahāpadma, Vardhani, Uśṇīṣa, Śankha, Kalaśa and Śrīvṛkṣa.
4. T. Ganapatisastri (1966), ch. 49, vs. 13-15 p. 270 lists the following circular varieties: Valaya, Dundubhi, Pranta, Padma, Kanta, Catrumukha, Manḍūka, Kūrma, Taligṛha and Ulupi.
5. *ibid.* p.53 & p.55 deal with with circular plans of 64 *padas.*
6. *Kulārṇava,* ch.8, v.52.
7. Jung (1979) p. 246.
8. *ibid.* p. 243.
9. *ibid.* p. 213.
10. Tucci (1971), p. 25.
11. *Kulārṇava,* ch. 10, v. 109: *vinā yantreṇa pūjā ceddevatā na prasīdati.* Also ch. 6, v.23. *maṇḍalena vinā pūjā niṣphalā kathitā priye.*
12. Any comprehensive Sanskrit dictionary, e.g. Apte (1977) gives a fairly exhaustive listing under *asta.*
13. Ananthakrisna Sastry (1942), Bk. I, ch.5
   ekavimśatyaikavimśatyaivemanllokān rohati
   svarga eva loke catusṣaṣtitamena pratiṣṭhati
   "By twentyone steps the scrificer ascends to each of three worlds; by taking the 64th step he stands firm in the celestial world."
14. S.C. Upadhyaya (1961), pp. 75-80 & pp. 101-103. The 10th century *Kalāvilāsa* of Kṣemendra refers also to 64 arts that make prostitutes successful, and to 64 skills possessed by goldsmiths. See Bholanath Tiwari (1958).
15. *Lalitā Sahasranāma,* titiles 235, 236, p. 129.
16. Avadhavihari Tripathi (1968).
17. Burnouf. p. 148.
18. 64 Bhairavas, See Manuscript in Madras devoted to their *pūjā* in Kaviraj (1972), pp. 19-23. 64 *mantras* in Bagchi (1934), patala VIII. 64 *pīṭhas* in *Kulārṇava*, ch.10, vs. 102-103.
19. In his *Tārārahasyam,* the great tantric mystic Brahmananda Giri (16th century) informs us that the worship of Tārā or Kālikā leads to various *siddhis* numbering 64 in all. Saryuprasad Shastri (1970), pp. 36-37:
   aṇimā laghimā vyāptiḥ prākāmyam mahimā tathā/
   adarśanam sthoulyarūpam vahni sthambham jalasya ca/
   candrasūryāgnibhūtānām stambako vibhureva saḥ/
   mantrasiddīstathā siddhīḥ purāṇāgamasiddhibhāk/
   upacāraviśeṣeṇa rājapatnīm vaśam nayet/
   catuḥṣaṣṭiprakāreṇa siddhirākāśagāminī
   The 64 *siddhis* are mentioned more than once in this text and also in the *Śaktiṣangama Tantra.* See Benyotosh Bhattacharya (1932), patala 2, v. 93: *catuṣaṣṭikalādevī catuṣaṣṭirhī siddhayah.*
20. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 20.
21. *ibid.* ch.24.
22. *ibid.* ch. 19.
23. *idem.*
24. Kramrisch (1976), p. 46.
25. *ibid.* note 86 on p. 50.
26. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 27.
27. 42 tantras are listed in the *Sarvollāsa Tantra* and the *Toḍalottara Tantra.* See Kaviraj (1972), p. 21.
28. The *Kubjikā Tantra* refers to 42 *pīṭhas.* See N.N. Bhattacharya (1977), p. 237.
29. Vrajavallabh Dvivedi (1968) p. 68 for arrangement of Bhūtalipi letters in nine rows.

अ	इ	उ	ऋ	लृ
ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	
ह	य	व	र	ल
ङ	क	ख	घ	ग
ञ	च	छ	झ	ज
ण	ट	ठ	ढ	ड
न	त	थ	ध	द
म	प	फ	भ	ब
श	ष	स		

30. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 7.
31. *ibid.* ch. 7, v. 7 & v. 45.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 20, v. 3.
2. Eliade (1958), p. 88, note 120. The Śrī Cakra texts give a slightly varying version; while agreeing on the first six, they substitute *bhukti* (enjoyment) and *icchā* (desire) in place of *garimā* and *kāmāvaśāyitā.*
3. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 24, vs.63-74 & end of ch. 7.
4. K.D. Vedavyas (1965), ch. 45, specially vs. 13-16. *Nāmāvalī* vs. 34-42.
5. Biswanarayan Sastri (1972), ch. 56, v. 57.
6. Van Kooij (1971), pp. 24ff.
7. Bagchi (1934), patala VII.
8. *Kulārṇava* ch. 10, v. 133.
9. *ibid.* ch. 10, v. 16
rogeṣvāpatsu doṣesu duḥsange durnimittake
pūjayed yoginīvṛndam devī taddoṣaśāntaye.
10. *ibid.* ch. 11, v. 92.
11. Jhavery (1944), p. 239.
12. Acharya Amaradeva (1962), p. 62, vs. 29-36.
13. See previous Chapter.
14. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 10, v. 93.
15. *Yoginī Sādhanam:*
bhāryā syādyadi sa devī sādhakasya manoharā
rājendraḥ sarvarājānām samsāre sādhakottamaḥ.
16. Shyambihari Misra (n.d.).
17. Gopinath Kaviraj (1972), an alphabetical catalogue of tantric manuscripts from all over India, with a brief indication of their contents, will reveal, at a glance, any number of manuscripts devoted to magic.
18. *Lalitā Sahasranāma:* (1951) p. 127, commentary on Devī's title of *Mahāyāgakramārādhyā* or "She who is worshipped by the method of Mahāyāga."
19. Manuscript No. 858/B.D. 189, Asiatic Society, Bombay.
20. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 20, vs. 35, 113, 127, 197.
21. *Kulārṇva* ch. 5, vs. 21-23.
22. Haraprasad Sastri (1974), ch. 23, v. 17.
23. Gautam (1973), p. 369.
24. *Kulārṇava* ch. 7, vs. 29, 31.
25. Biswanarayan Sastri (1972), ch. 67.
26. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964) Vol. 3, p. 139
kāmarūpe mahāpīṭhe ruṇḍamuṇḍoparisthite
nānāgaṇasamākīrṇe vicitrayoginīgaṇa.
27. Gautam (1973), p. 333.
28. Dhana Shamsher (1968), vol. II, p. 348:
śavādhiṣṭhāna devebhyo balim dadyāt surā saha
catuṣaṣṭi yoginībhyo ḍākinībhyo balim diśet
29. *ibid.* Vol. II. pp. 354-356.
30. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 4.
31. Shri Tirath Nath Sarma of the Assam Electrical Board and a resident of Kāmākhyā, related how he had watched part of the ritual as a youngster wanting to face the ghoulish. Aware of the existence of the practice, he and a

friend went to the local *śmaśāna* at dead of night. There they saw a naked *adhikārī* accompanied by his nude *bhairavī* seated up on a corpse (though not in union), both chanting *mantras*. When their ritual chanting called up a tiger and some jackals, the terrifed boys fled to safety.

32. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 10, vs. 84, 85.
mulāṣṭakantu brahmādhya ścāsitāngādibhairavaḥ
mangalādyaisca mithunairaṣṭabhiḥ śabditaḥ priye
mūlāṣṭakodbhavāniti prasīddhāni kulāgame
akṣobhyādi catuḥṣaṣṭimithunāni samarcayet.
33. Gautam (1973), p. 190, vs. 32-34.
34. Dhana Shamsher (1968), Vol. III, p. 426.
35. *ibid.* p. 432.
pravṛitte bhairavīcakre sarve varṇā dvijātayaḥ
nivṛitte bhairavīcakre sarve varṇāh pṛthak pṛthak
cakramadhyagataḥ sarve puruṣa śivarūpiṇaḥ
striyah sarvāścha pārvatyastasmād bhedam na kārayet.
36. Bagchi (1934), p. 61 speaks of the *Kāmākhyā Guḥya Siddhi*, a manuscript in the Nepal National Archives, that associates the eight Mātṛkās with eight types of low caste women. Brahmāṇī flourishes in the house of a prostitute in Prayāga; Māheśvarī with a wine-dealer in Varuṇa; Kaumārī with a fisherwoman in Kolhapur; Vaiṣṇavī with a ditch-digger in Aṭṭahāsa; Varāhī with a female jester in Jayantī; Aindrī with a washerwoman in Caritra; Cāmuṇḍā in Ekāmra; and Mahālakṣmī with a female juggler in Devakoṭa. While all these localities, and hence the Mātṛkās too may be visualised as existing within one-self, the reference to low-caste women is explicable only in the context of Kaula ideas on the special suitability of such women in preference to those of higher status.
37. It is impossible to meet up with these *bhairavīs* unless an initiate oneself into the tantric fold. As one sympathiser explained, these men and women need, for all outward purposes, to live in society. Many have children who would not wish it to be public knowledge that one or other of their parents belongs to a tantric group of this type. No one meeting a *bhairavī* would, in fact, realise she was one.
38. I am informed by those whose word on the subject has authority that a Bhairavī Cakra is formed at regular intervals in the city of Delhi.
39. Dhana Shamsher (1968) Vol. III, p. 422.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Mathura Museum panel No. 33.2331.4. See B.N. Sharma (1979), Plate 2.
2. J.F. Fleet (1888), pp. 72-78. Also D.C. Sircar (1965), p. 399f.
3. Damodar Satvalekar (1973), ch. 45, vs. 1-40, pp. 351-356.
4. Raghunath Singh (1969), Bk. 1, v. 122.
5. C. Tripathi (n.d.), Act 1, p. 46. :*gaccha catuṣpathe balimupahāra mātṛbhyaḥ.*
6. M.R. Kale (1962), Act 1, p. 24 :*gaccha tvamapi catuṣpathe mātṛbhyo balimupahāra.*
7. D. Satvalekar (1973), ch. 45, vs. 25, 27. See also Kosambi (1962), ch. III.
8. Gautam (1973), p. 221.
9. Lorenzen (1972), p. 20.
10. R.C. Agrawala (1959) and (1961).
11. Fleet (1888), pp. 47-52 :*skanda pradhānair bhuvi mātṛbhiśca*
12. Harle (1974), p. 50.
13. Umakant Shah (1960)
14. R.C. Agrawala (1968-71), pp. 134-136.
15. Raghunath Singh (1969), Bk. 1, vs. 331-333.
16. N.N. Bhattacharya (1977), p. 128.
17. Avadhavihari Tripathi (1968), Vol. II, ch. 59, v. 19 and ch. 57, v. 56.
18. The *Guhyasiddhikrama* in Buddhisagar Sharman (1964), Vol. IV, p. 109. See note 76 to ch. 1.
19. Hazra (1975), p. 138.
20. Haraprasad Shastri (1939), p. 1.
21. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964) Vol. IV. 1, pp. 58ff.
22. Gopinath Kaviraj (1972), p. 136.
23. Bagchi (1939), p. 93.

24. *ibid.* p. 15.
25. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964), Vol IV 1, pp. 124-127. See also Bagchi (1939), pp. 56, 57. He quotes a passage from Manuscript No. 375 (folia 189, 190) of the Nepal Durbar Library that contains 11 questions to be put to the Yoginīs while meeting them in deep dark nights. The language of the questions is Paiśācī, and Bagchi confesses to being unable to explain them.
26. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964), Vol. IV, 2, pp. 18-22.
27. Bagchi (1939), p. 7, p. 102.
28. Bagchi (1934), Introduction *passim*.
29. *Kulārṇava,* ch. 10, v. 109 and ch. 6, v. 23.
30. *ibid.* ch. 16, v. 91. *trilouhe vāpi bhūrje likhitvā yantramuttamam.*
31. Biswanarayan Sastri (1972), ch. 63, v. 44.
32. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 7, EG:
    kramena cālikhenmūrtim aṣṭapatrāditaḥ kramāt;
    cakramadhyagatālekhyā vṛttākāreṇa sundarī;
    pate tu samlikheccakram yathāvarṇasvarūpataḥ.
33. Jhavery (1944), pp. 218-220.
34. *ibid.* pp. 229-234.
35. *ibid.* p. 334.
36. Appendix I, List 7.
37. Biswanarayan Sastri (1972), ch. 63, vs. 37-43 for complete list; ch. 54, vs. 35-39 for incomplete list.
38. *ibid.* ch. 63, v. 43 for instance.
39. *ibid.* ch. 56, v. 7, v. 5.
40. *ibid.* ch. 61, v. 115.
41. *ibid.* ch. 63, v. 7.
42. Bagchi (1934), Introduction *passim.*
43. Gautam (1973), ch. 6, v. 135.
44. Buddhisagar Sharman (1964), Vol. IV, 2, p. 139.
45. Hazra (1958), Vol. 2, p. 82.
46. *ibid.* p. 277.
47. *ibid.* pp. 407-408.
    yoginībhiḥ parivṛtam nṛtyantibhir itastataḥ
    dadatībhiḥ pibantībhiḥ śoṇitam madhu cāsavam.
48. *ibid.* pp. 239-240.
    aṣṭamīnavamīsandhou trtīyā khalu kathyate
    tatra pūjyā tvaham putra yoginīgaṇasamyutā
    manoharaiśca balibhir upahāraiḥ pṛthagvidhaih.
49. I have seen this manuscript but have been unable to get a transcribed copy.
50. Kanaiyalal Dave (1963), pp. 370-371.
51. Jhavery (1944), p. 234.
52. P.K. Prabhudesai (1978), p. 374. See also W. Dymock (1890-1891) and Karambelkar (1955), pp. 362-374.
53. Lorenzẹn (1972) contains a clear dissertation on this point.
54. Manuscript No. D 14662, entitled *Catuṣṣaṣṭiyoginīpūjā*, Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Library.
55. Balasubrahmanyam (1975), p. 119f.
56. I am indebted for information on this text to Dr Nagaswamy.
57. R.K. Sharma (1978), p. 32.
58. Walhouse (1974), p. 35.
59. *Kulārṇava*, ch. 10, v. 93.
60. See note 15 above.
61. For details, see Mūla Cakra discussion in Chapter 2.
62. R.K. Dikshit (1977), Zannas and Auboyer (1960)
63. Quoted in Lorenzen (1972), p. 60.
64. *ibid.* p. 49.
65. *Lalitā Sahasranāma*, pp. 89, 90, 215, 216.
66. Pramod Chandra (1955-56), pp. 98-107. On the idenfification of Jain figures, Devangana Desai presented a paper at the April 1981 symposium "The Presence of Śiva" held at Philadelphia.
67. *G.A.R.* (1942-46).
68. V.V. Mirashi (1955).
69. Mirashi (1965), pp. 79-93. An inscription from Malkapuram in the Guntur

district, dated *saṁvat* 1183, gives much information on the Mattamayūras.
70. *ibid.* p. 86, note 21 tells of M.G. Dikshit having discovered these circular foundations.
71. For summary of early Orissan political scene see Dehejia (1979), ch. 1.
72. *Kulārṇava,* ch. 17, v. 101.
73. Janardhan Pandeya (1976), ch. 20, v. 6.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Life-size images of the eight Mātṛkās are seen, among other places, at the Daśāśvamedha *ghāṭ* at Jajpur. In the same town may be seen three collosal Mātṛkās from a shrine long since destroyed.
2. Cunningham (1874-75 & 1875-76).
3. Kedarnath Mahapatra (1953).
4. Charles Fabri (1974).
5. MS. No. ORP 101, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar. See K. C. Panigrahi (1975). For date of Sarab Dasa.
6. Dehejia (1979), pp. 48ff.
7. *ibid.* p. 1987
8. Kedarnath Mahapatra (1953), pp. 23-40
9. One wonders whether this second entrance had anything to do with some special rite of circumambulation that perhaps necessitated a return to the front after a partial *pradakṣiṇā.*
10. Cunningham (18740-75 and 1875-76), pp. 128-137.
11. Fabri (1974), pp. 100ff. describes the Ranipur-Jharial sculptor as a hackworker, but this judgement seems unnecessarily harsh.
12. Dehejia (1979), p. 138. Inscription: *idam tīrtham snāthvā sarva pāpa vimocanā;* p. 171

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Auboyer & Zannas (1960), pp. 87-93. Also L.K. Tripathi (1975-76), pp. 33ff.
2. Auboyer & Zannas (1960), p. 88.
3. L.K. Tripathi (1974-75).
4. Copies of these photographs are in the Photo Section of the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi in volume labelled "U.P. 1909-1910".
5. *G.A.R.* (1942-46), pp. 66ff. contain a brief notice of these inscriptions. The complete text has never been published.
6. Naresar images, discussed in Chapter 9.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Banerji (1931).
2. R.K. Sharma (1978).
3. *idem.*
4. See Chapter 2
5. R.K. Sharma (1978), p. 174 and Plate.
6. Biswanarayan Sastri (1972, ch. 61, v. 98
7. *Lalitā Sahasranāma* (1951), title No. 780.
8. This is unusual iconography for Devī, reminiscent of Śiva in his aspect of Gajasamhāramūrti, Killer of the elephant demon.
9. Mirashi (1955), Plate XLIX; Sharma (1978) p. 33 also thinks it is connected with this temple.
10. *ibid.* Plate LVIII, pp. 363ff.
11. *ibid.* Plate XXX. Mirashi reviews various lines of evidence and finally concludes that the Kalacuri-Cedi era started in A.D. 249.
12. *ibid.* Plate
13. *Ep. Ind.* (1892) I, P. 77.
14. *Ind. Ant.* (1877) VI, p. 50.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. See Chapter 2.
2. P.C. Mukherji (1899).
3. I am indebted to Dr Pratapaditya Pal for this information.

4. D.R. Patil (1952), p. 110, voiced the possiblity of these images being Yoginīs.

Notes to Chapter 9

1. S.K. Dikshit (1957).
2. It may be pointed out that typesetters in India often set type for English books without any knowledge of the language, basing the entire work on the shape of each letter; it is hence that first proofs are so full of errors.
3. Pan-Asian collection.
4. Vinod Dvivedi (1971)
5. These labels remain unpublished. Varying readings include Vāmadeva, Vāmvadeva; *praṇamati, praṇamiti, praṇampati.*
6. This inscription is unpublished, and my analysis is based on an examination of the site, followed by a study of the photograph.
7. D.R. Patil (19526), p. 97.
9. This site was identified by K.D. Bajpai as a Yoginī site; he is also writing an article on the images.
10. The bullheaded Yoginī with an elephant-headed child, and Naresar's parrot-faced Yoginī with a boar-faced child are fascinating examples of cross-breeding;

Notes to Chapter 10

1. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (n.d.)
2. Pratapaditya Pal (1978), Plate 75: Durgamandala, dated 1375-1400.
3. Appendix I.
4. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *op. cit.*
5. See for instance Larson, Pal & Gowen (1980), Plate 34, p. 69.
6. Sivaramamurti (1977), captions to Plates 135 and 306.
7. A 9th century date is suggested for the Brooklyn Yoginī in *The Goddess in Indian Art,* the catalogue of an exhibition held in early 1980. A late 15th century date is suggested for the Museé Guimet Yoginīs in Mallmann (1963), p. 182.
8. I am indebted for this information to J.C. Harle, who tells me there is private correspondence between the French scholar and C.T. Loo who bought the goddesses.
9. A later Cola inscription of Rajakesarivarman in the temple of Kalapriya at Kaveripakkam refers to it as owing its origin to Krishna III. The Karhad grant of Krishna III *(Ep, Ind. IV)* tells us that he camped at Melpadi (close to Kaveripakkam) to establish his following in the southern area and to construct temples to Kalapriya, Gaṇḍamārtaṇḍa, Krishneśvara and others. The Sundara-varada-perumal temple at Kaveripakkam is also a construction of Krishna III *(S.I.I.* XIII. Nos. 129, 130). That he built temples all over the south is indicated by inscriptional evidence. At Tiruvandarkoil near Pondicherry is a temple inscription that refers to the 28th year of Krishna *(S.I.I.* XIII, No. 115, p. 57). In a temple at Emapperur in South Arcot is another inscription referring to the temple as a foundation of Kīrtimārtaṇḍa which is a second name of Krishna III *(S.I.I.* XIII, No. 263, P. 150).
10. Sivaramamurti (1955) pp. 10-14.
11. *idem.*
12. Handiqui (1968).

Notes to Appendix II

1. Gautam (1973), p. 73; *Tantra Kaumudī.*
2. This text was published by the Nepal National Archieves in 1967.
3. My dates for the *Matottara* are discussed in the Preface.
4. *Lalitā Sahasranāma,* p. 127, 130.
5. *Kulārṇava,* ch. 10, v. 85.
6. Balram Srivastava (1978)
7. Jhavery (1944).
8. V.S. Agrawala (1970). Appendix II, No. 3, and Agarchand Nahta (1962), pp. 67-77.

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Arcanā-paddhati	1820	B.U.
Bagalā-pūjā-paddhati	1750	B.U.
Bhairavī-cakram	5/129	S.B.
Bhūtalipi mātṛkā pūjā vidhi	11824	Baroda
Cakrānuṣṭhāna-vidhi	6/16	S.B.
Cakrānuṣṭhāna-paddhati	6/21	S.B.
Cakra-nirṇaya	175	S.B.
Cakra-nirūpaṇam	178	S.B.
Cakra-vidhi	31/171	S.B.
Caṇḍī-Purāṇam	ORP 101	Bhubanesvar
Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-nāmāvalī	2/150 62505	S.B.
Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā	D. 14662	Madras
Catuṣasti-yoginī-pūjan	8177	Baroda
Catuṣaṣṭi-yoginī-pūjā-vidhi	28/179	S.B.
Durgā Pūjā	DH/345	Bhubanesvar
Kālīkulāmṛta tantra	G. 4671	A.S.C.
Kāmākhyā tantra	G. 1620	A.S.C.
Kaula Daśā	877 B.I. 128	B.A.
Kaulānanda-laharī	6/5	S.B.
Kaula-rahasyam	5/132	S.B.
Kumārī pūjā	1770	B.U.
Mahākālī-ṣoḍaśa-pātra	858 B.D. 189	B.A.
Nityā-kavaca	844 B.D. 182	B.A.
Saramānanda tantra	G. 1390	A.S.C.
Sankaṭa-yoginī-pūjā-vidhi	844 B.D. 182	B.A.
Śrī-cakra-pūjā-paddhati	1928	B.U.
Śrī Matottara tantra	4/2506	Kathmandu
Vīrendrakutūhala	877 B.D. 128	B.A.
Yakṣiṇī-praveśa-yoga	1897	B.U.
Yoginī-cakra-pūjan	247/41883-84	Poona
Yoginī Daśā	1359	Baroda
Yoginī-mantra-yantrādi	7/107 25610	S.B.
Yoginī pūjā	G. 11323	A.S.C.
Yoginī pūjā	G. 11327	A.S.C.
Yoginyādi-pūjan-vidhi	246/A1883-84	Poona
Yoginī sādhanam	G. 2819	A.S.C.
Yoginī sādhanam	25755	S.B.
Yoginī sādhanam	30/71	S.B.
Yoginī-sādhana-prayoga	24852	S.B.

Yoginī-sādhana-prayoga	20/149	S.B.
Yoginī-sahasranāmam	BMC 161. 14/ 5793	B.A.
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Index

Abhinavagupta, 74
Agni Purāṇa, xi, 28, 31, 34, 35, 42, 72, 76, 79, 187, 201, 205
Aitereya Brāhmaṇa, 44
Andhra & the Yoginīs, 83
Āścarya yogamālā, 56
Assam & the Yoginīs, 78-79
Badoh, 86, 117, 142-43
Bagchi, 74
Bāṇa (Harṣa's court poet), 68, 83
Banerji, R.D., 126
Bengal & the Yoginīs, 79
Bhairava, 13, 14, 17, 28, 31, 34, 35, 40, 44, 48, 57, 59, 62, 83, 86, 95, 102, 115
Bhairavī cakra, 13, 62
Bhāsa's *Cārudatta,* 68
Bheraghat, 40, 58, 63, 70, 88, 89, 90, 111, 125-40, 156, 162, 172, 173 192, 193-194
Bhoja, 42, 53
Bhopal: Birla Museum, 153; State Museum, 154
Bhukti, 185
Bhūtaḍāmaratantra, 36
Bhūta-lipi, 51-52, 141, App. III. 217
Blood, 57, 64, 80, 91, 186
Brahma Yāmala, 74
British Museum, 180
Brooklyn Museum, 180, 181
Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, x,
Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, 57, 79
Bṛhannandikeśvara Purāṇa, 188, 94
Brhatsambhitā of Varāhamihira, 42, 44, 48, 72
Cakra, 2, 7, 13, 16, 17, 22, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 53 76, 80, 85, 131, 186, 191, 192; in ancient world, 40; in Buddhist world, 40 internal, 17-18, 48, 63; *mātṛkā* (alphabet), 51, 52, 141; *mātṛkā* (mothers), 28, 68; of forty-two, 51, 52, of sixty-four, 43-48; of eighty-one, 48-51, 56, 129, 130, 138
Cakra Nirūpaṇam, 63
Candellas, 86, 88, 89, 90, 115, 117, 123, 141, 142, 143, 151
Caṇḍī Purāṇa of Sarala Dasa, viii, 22, 80, 91-92, 192, 194
Caste: irrelevance of in Kaula worship, 63
Cemeteries (*śmaśāna*), 14, 16, 17, 59, 68
Central India & the Yoginī cults, 80
Coimbatore: mistaken Yoginī temple, 83-87
Cola, 176, 181, 182
Coomaraswamy, 36
Corpse ritual (*śava-sādhanā*), 58-60, 63, 102, 118, 119, 136, 137, 166, 186
Cunningham, ix, 91, 106
Ḍākinī, 67; as sorceress, 13, 15-16, 17; as yoginī of internal cakra, 17; as yoginī of Yoginī Cakra, 45; ḍākinī cakra, 16
Daśakumāracarita, 16
Dattātreya tantra, 56
Denver Art Museum, 120
Devī 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, 32, 45, 53, 58, 63, 78, 79, 80, 83, 92, 185, 188; devī cakra, 72
Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa
Devī Māhātmyam, 22, 28, 57, 188
Devī Purāṇa, 78, 191
Detroit Institute of Arts, 177
Dhubela Museum, 163, 165, 172
Dikpāla, 43, 145, 148
Dikpālikās, 145, 148, 164, 187, 191-92, 202, 203
Dudahi (temple of Yoginīs), ix, 141-42
Durgā pūjā manuscript, 176
Eliade, Mircea, 15
Fabri, Charles, 91
Folk-style painting of Yoginī, 7
Flesh, 13, 15, 16, 17, 57, 64, 86, 91, 186
Gadhwa, see Rikhiyan
Gaṇas, 23, 24, 26
Gangādhar inscription, 67
Gorakṣa Sambhitā, xii, 32
Grahas, 17, 48
Grāma-devatā, 1-2, 94, 186
Guhyasiddhikrama, 35
Gujarat and the Yoginīs, 80
Gwalior Museum, 145
Harivamśa, 72
Hemādri's *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi,* 6, 92, 164, 205
Hinglajgadh, 86, 145, 153-55
Hirapur temple, ix, 40, 70, 89-90, 91, 92, 93, 95-102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 128, 133, 156, 180
Human sacrifice, 59, 86, 88
Human victim, 14, 15
Indian Museum, Calcutta, 163, 168
Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, 48
Jain: goddess Padmāvatī, 36; hymn *Śantikarma,* 55; in *Prabodhacandrodaya,* 86; (*Kṣapaṇakas*), 88; list of Yoginī, 145; reference to Yoginī temples, 80-81; saint Jinaprabhasūri's list, 191-92; saint Nemicandrasūri, 55; saints control over the Yoginīs, 76-77; temples, 141-142
Jayadratha Yāmala, 74
Jñānārṇava Ṭantra, x, 35, 62
Jouveau-Dubrevil, 175
Kacchapaghatas, 88, 123, 151

Kacchavahas, 88, 123, 124, 151
Kāla (aspects), 22, 44
Kalacuris, 88-89, 137, 128, 139
Kālāmukha, 83
Kalhaṇa, 68, 72, 81
Kālī Tantra, 27
Kālikā Purāṇa, xi, 27, 55, 57, 76, 78, 80, 131, 165, 176, 188, 193, 194
Kāmākhyā temple, 57-58, 60, 63, 78, 176, 186, 191
Kāmasūtra of Vātsyāyana, 44
Kancipuram, 181
Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum, 180
Kāpālika, 15, 17, 83, 86, 88, 90
Karnataka and the Yoginīs, 83
Karpūramañjarī of Rajasekhara, 86, 90
Kashmir and the Yoginī cult, 81
Kathāsaritsāgara, xi, 14, 15, 16, 28, 90
Kaula, xi, 11, 13, 19, 20, 26, 31-35, 62, 64, 74, 86, 88, 90, 185
Kaula cakra, 13 32, 62
Kaulajñānanirṇaya, xii, 24, 32, 34, 55, 74, 79
Kaulāvalīnirṇaya, 13, 57, 59, 68, 79
Kaveripakkam, 181, 182
Kedarnath Mahapatra, 91, 101
Khajuraho, 86, 88, 115-17, 118, 122, 138
Khechara, 16, 45
Khecarī cakra, xii, 28, 44-45, 202, App. III, 218
Kolarammā, 1, 83
Kṣetra, 48
Kubjikāmata, 73, 81
Kula, 36, 187
Kulalikāmnāyam, 73
Kulārṇava Tantra, xi, 13, 20, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 55, 56, 57, 62, 76, 85, 203
Kuṇḍalinī, 17, 18, 63
Lalitā Sahasranāma: x, 19, 27, 56, 88, 131, 193; Bhaskararaya's commentary on, 28, 56
Liṅga, 122, 185
Lokhari (temple and images), 86, 145, 156-62
Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa, 27, 79
Mahābhārata, 44, 67, 68, 70
Mahākāla ṣamhitā, 188
Mahākālī ṣoḍaśapātra, 57
Maharashtra & the Yoginīs, 82-83
Mahāyakṣinī Tantra
Mahiṣamardinī as Yoginī, 115, 116, 134-35, 153-54, 163, 166, 168-69
Maithuna (ritual copulation), 11, 13, 59, 62-64, 137, 186
Mālatī mādhava of Bhavabhut, 15, 17
Mālinī Cakra, xii, 52, 141
Mānasollāsa, 51
Maṇḍala (see also Cakra & Yantra), 42, 43, 44, 59, 62, 76, 85, 175
Manthānabhairava Tantra, 56
Mantras, 44, 55, 56, 59, 64, 131, 133
Manuscripts: potency of, x,
Mathura, 67
Matottara Tantra, xii, 6, 32, 34, 35, 44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, 73, 76, 81, 85, 125, 129, 203, 205-209
Mātṛkās/Mothers, 5, 27-31, 34, 35, 42, 44, 45, 48, 51, 57, 59, 62, 67-72, 80, 81, 83, 91, 92, 94, 95, 104, 117, 120, 127, 129, 130, 142, 145, 154, 161, 164, 168, 175, 176, 187, 188, 191, 192, 193, 201-203; temple of, 28, 68,
Mātṛcakras, 28, 68
Mātṛkās: (letters of the alphabet), 51-52; mätrka cakra, 141
Mattamayūra, 89, 90
Mayadīpikā, 202
Meru Tantra, 35, 62, 63
Mitauli (Yoginī temple), 40, 86, 88, 115, 122-24, 153
Mothers (see also Mātṛkās): images of, at: Amjhara, 70; Badoh-Pathari, 68; Besnagar, 68; Samalaji, 68, 70; Thanesara-Mahādeva, 68, 70; as Skandamātās, 69,
Mokṣa, 53
Mukti, 53, 185
Mukteśvar at Bhubanesvar, 28
Mūla Cakra of eighty-one, xii, 48-51, 56, 129, 130, 138
Mūlādhāra Cakra, 17, 63
Museé Guimet, 176, 177
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 180
Madras Museum, 181, 182
Naresar (Yoginī temple), x, 86, 88, 145-53, 164, 173, 193
Nāthas, 74, 75
Navadurgā, 48, 78, 101, 187, 188,
Nepal & the Yoginīs, 81, 186
Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava, 35
Numerology, 43-44, 48, 51
Orissa and the Yoginīs, 80, 89-90, 186
Orissa temples of Yoginīs, 91-114
Paramaras, 42, 139
Patañjali's *Yogasūtras,* 53
Phetkāriṇī Tantra, 22
Pīṭha, 44, 51, 78, 79, 191
Prabodhacandrodaya of Krisnamisra, 86, 90
Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇa-sāra-samuccaya (P.L.S.S.), 202-203
Rajasthan & the Yoginīs, 80
Rājataraṅgiṇī of Kalhaṇa, xi, 14, 62, 68, 72, 81
Ranipur-Jharial (Yoginī temple), 40, 58, 90, 91, 93, 103-114, 133, 150, 156, 162
Rāṣṭrakūṭa, 182, 183
Reitberg Museum, Zurich, 177, 178
Rikhiyan, 58, 8, 115, 117, 118-20, 133, 156
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 177
Royalty and the Yoginīs, 51, 55, 56, 76, 85-90, 125, 138-39, 182
Sadāśiva Rath Sarma, 80
Sahadol,
Sākinī; as sorceress, 13, 16-17; as Yoginī of internal cakra, 17; as deity of Yoginī cakra, 45
Śāktānanda taranginī, 36
Śakti, 13, 19, 32, 44, 185
Sahasrāra Cakra, 17, 18, 63
Samarāngaṇa Sūtradhāra, 42
Sandhā bhāṣā, xi
Śaradātilaka Tantra, 52
Sarala Dasa, 94
Sarvatobhadra formation, 51
Śava Sādhanā: (see corpse ritual)
Shahdol (Yoginī temple site), 58, 89, 90, 11, 145, 163-74, 192
Siddhis (occult powers), 18, 36, 44, 45, 51, 52, 53-56, 59, 86
Śiraścheda, 74
Śiva, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 35, 40, 44, 53, 56, 63, 74, 89, 91, 95, 102, 103, 115, 122, 123, 124, 127, 185, 191
Sivaramamurti, 182
Skanda, 67, 70
Skanda Purāṇa, xi, 22, 24, 31, 54, 55, 56, 148, 188, 194, 204, 215-216
Śrī Cakra, 19, 35
Śrī Mattotara Tantra: see *Mattotara Tantra*
Śrī Vidyā, 19
Śrīparvata, 15, 83
Śrīvidyāpīṭhamatsara, 35

Stella Kramrisch, 48, 49
Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika*, 68
Takka Yāga Paranī, 83
Tamilnadu & the Yoginīs, 83
Tantrasāra of Krishnananda, 79, 80
Uḍḍīśa Tantra, 36, 56
Uttama caritra kathānakha, 13
Valaya (circular), 42
Vāmakeśvara Tantra, 35
Varāhī Tantra, 35, 58, 79
Vartula (circular), 42
Vedas, 43
Vetālapañcavimśati, 16
Vīra Cūḍāmaṇi, 59
Vīra Tantra, 59
Viṣṇu Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 19
Wine/liquor, 13, 45, 48, 57, 59, 64, 80, 83, 86, 186
Yakṣiṇīs, 35-38, 56
Yakṣiṇī Prayoga
Yantra, 42, 43, 45, 62, 76, 77, 85
Yaśastiḷaka of Somadevasūri, xi, 26-27, 182-83
Yoginīs: as attendant deities of the Great Goddess, 23-27, 161, 185; as *digpālikās*, 187, 191, 192, 202; as acolytes of the Great Goddess, 22-31, 130-37, 145, 154, 187; as aspets of the Great Goddess, 22-23, 130-36, 185, 188-189, 192-193; as adept in Yoga, 11; as the Great Goddess, 19-20, 83; amusing legend regarding, 7; fear of ix; as Nava Durgās, 188; as partner in cakra-pūjā, 11, 13; as patron goddesses of Kaulas, 31-35; as sorceress, 13-15, 17; and mātṛkās, 27-71; of astrology, 17; of the internal cakras, 17-18; of the Śrī Cakra, 19; *nāmāvalīs*, xi, 5, 31, 80; many meanings of, 11; preoccupation with naming, 5-7; Rajasthan painting of, 7
Yoginī Cakra, xii, 7, 13, 14, 22, 30, 31, 34, 42, 45-48, 62, 63, 72
Yogeśvarī Cakra, 14
Yogeśvarī, 72, 81
Yoginī kavaca, 55, 78
Yoginī *mata*, 55, 73, 78
Yoginīdaśā, xi, 17
Yoginīhṛdaya, 35
Yoginīhṛdaya dīpikā, 35
Yoginīpūjā vidhi, xi,
Yoginīpura (Delhi), 81, 85
Yoginī Sādhanā, 36, 56, 85
Yoginī Sādhanā Prayoga, 36
Yoginī Sahasranāma, 20
Yoginī-mantra-yantrādi, 191
Yoginī Tantra, 36
Yoginī temple plan, 2, 39-40
Yoginī temples: location of, 63-64; second entrance into, 104
Yoni, 122, 130, 185, 191

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